
ORIGEN against *CELSUS*:

Translated from the

ORIGINAL

INTO

ENGLISH.

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By James Bellamy, Gent.

*Nec Verbum Verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres.*

Horat. de Arte Poet.

L O N D O N,

Printed by B. Mills, and Sold by
J. Robinson, at the Golden Lyon in
St. Paul's Church-Yard.

Printed by E. W. B. and Son, 17
F. W. B. and Son, 17
St. Paul's Church-yard.

The Translator's
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R.

THAT Translations of Learned Authors in general, especially if they be carefully undertak'n, and prudently manag'd, are of great Use to the Publick, I think, after all that has been said against 'em, no Person can reasonably deny, or ev'n call into question. For as the same Reasons which may be assign'd, for the Commendation of a Fountain of Water, may as well be brought in Praise of the Streams, which proceed from it, so far as they are properly convey'd: So I think, the very same Arguments which are us'd in Favour of any Learned Original, will equally serve, to justifie, and recommend a Translation of it, so far as it answers its principal End, in conveying

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ing to our Minds the true Sence of the Author.

— And tho' I think, I may say, without the Suspicion of Vanity, that I have, in some measure employ'd my Time and Strength, in the Study of the Learned Languages, and that I highly value 'em, as the happy Vehicles of solid and useful Learning; yet the bare Language in which a Book is writ (let it be never so much extoll'd, as being learned, and copious, or esteem'd for its Antiquity, native Majesty, and inimitable Sweetness) is, I confess, one of the least Things, which will ever recommend it to my Esteem, and Perusal.

For I humbly conceive, that in all our Studies we shou'd not so much nibble at Words, which are, as it were, but the Bark of the Tree of Knowledge, as aim at the Improvement of our Reason, which is a strong Reflection from the Deity, and affords abundant Matter of agreeable Entertainment, to them, who are so happy, as to be distinguish'd from the Generality of Mankind, by a wonderful Penetration of Soul. And if an Author, by his natural Capacity, and acquir'd Abilities, do's make a more than ord'nary Figure in the intellectual and learned World, is an Honour to the
Age

Age in which he flourish'd, and perhaps equally the Wonder and Envy of succeeding Ages, I think, the more Reasons may be assign'd, why he shou'd be cloath'd in the *English* Language, which is most familiar to us, and is allow'd by all capable Judges, to be very expressive, copious, and charming. For certainly 'tis Pity, that such immense Treasures of Sence and Learning shou'd be confin'd, to those few Persons, in a comparative Sence, who happen to understand the Language in which he writes, and like the vast Mines in *Peru* and *Mexico*, serve chiefly for the Convenience, and Delight of those, who are Foreign to us, both by Blood, and by Religion.

And I have often thought, and 'tis the Opinion of many Persons, who are far more capable of judging than myself, that 'twou'd conduce very much to the Honour of the *BRITISH NATION*, to have the Fathers of the *Three First Centuries*, those Heroes of *Antiquity*, and Pillars of the *Christian Church*, translated into the Language of our Country, and cloath'd in so *Modern* and so Charming a Dress, if it be possible, that many of both Sexes, whose Genius and Education do's not lead 'em, to the Study of *Greek* and *Latin*, may be induc'd to read 'em,

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and to square their Lives by those excellent Rules of Vertue, and Piety, which they have laid down, for the Conduct of Others, and of which they were in their several Ages, and are still, in some Sence, living, and *highly bonourable* Examples.

And since, by the Policy of a Neighbouring Nation, the Language of *Lewis* the XIVth has already obtain'd that UNIVERSAL MONARCHY, to which he *seems* to aspire, and since, many excellent Translations, of which the *French* may justly boast, have invited, and almost constrain'd, many ingenious and polite Persons, to learn and admire their Language, and so perhaps they have been unhappily and insensibly won over to their *Corrupt Religion* and *Slavish Principles of Government*, I think, 'tis not a little strange, that we, who are so prone to a *Phantastical Imitation* of 'em, shou'd so much abound, in *Unnecessary* and *Trifling Originals*, and give so little Encouragement, to the Translation of those Ancient Authors, whom, in Spite of all our Ignorance and Prejudice, we must acknowledge to have been remarkable for their Learning, and whose Labours, since they were generally approv'd, and *highly admir'd*, in the *Early and Pure Ages of the Church*,
and

and since they strangely confounded the *Whole Heathen World*, one wou'd think, might very well serve for our Confirmation, and delightful Entertainment. And tho' we deservedly pay a *most profound Respect* to the *Greek and Hebrew Text of Scripture*, as claiming in a strict Sense the Venerable Title of the *Word of G O D*, and challenging in a special Manner the Time, and Strength of those, whom God and Men have thought fit to employ, in the Explication and Defence of the Sacred Oracles; yet 'tis an extraordinary Happiness, which we in these Nations enjoy, that we have such excellent Translations of the Bible, and ev'n the common People (who have precious and immortal Souls, as well as others, and want more Helps, for the regular and comfortable Discharge of their Duty,) are so far from being commanded by their Ministers, to avoid 'em, as being dangerous in unskillful Hands, and an imperfect Rule, both of Faith, and Manners, that they are strictly enjoyn'd, and with all imaginable Tenderness entreated, to read 'em, with the greatest Seriousness, Industry, and Pleasure.

And if we have just Cause, to return God our most humble and hearty Thanks, for raising up, and inclining

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some proper Persons, to undertake so important and so difficult a Work, for affording such Measures of his gracious Assistance, as were necessary, to support, and encourage 'em in it, and to bring it at last to a most honourable and happy Accomplishment, I think, the Translations of any pious, rational, and learned Authors, whose Labours have a tendency, to lead us, into the *true* and *deep* Sense of the holy Scriptures, and to furnish us with proper Weapons, to encounter the inveterate and most formidable Adversaries of the Christian Religion, must be very desireable, and attended with no small Advantages.

I confess, I am highly sensible, that Translations do frequently abound with Faults, and perhaps with such as are notorious, which should a Person undertake to justify, he wou'd expose himself, to the Scorn, or Pity of the learned World, and to the Censure ev'n of the injudicious, and illiterate.

But this, if it be a solid Objection against bad Translations, (which I hardly believe it is, since they may have many great Defects, and yet the Translator shou'd be esteem'd, and rewarded for his good Will to the Publick, and that Measure of Industry, and Skill in the learned Languages, which appears in his Work, tho' he

deserves

deserves far less Esteem, than one, who happily accomplishes some accurate Composition, or more compleat Translation,) I say this, if it be a solid Argument against bad Translations, wo'nt hold against such as are good, and so apparently and so highly useful, that thou'd any one exclaim against 'em, he would but betray his Folly, and provoke the Laughter, or silent Scorn, of those, who are not as remarkable Triflers as himself.

For if no Translator must appear in the World, who is not so industrious, and so correct, that he almost seems to be free, from those Faults, to which the Frailty of humane Nature renders Mankind unavoidably subject, if the Taste of Readers is so nice, as to disrellish the the most exact Translations, that are extant, by Reason of many great Defects, which insensibly creep, into the best humane Compositions, then the same Argument which is us'd against Translations, will equally overthrow the most learned and useful *Originals* that ever were, and ev'n the sacred Oracles of the supream and all-wise Being.

For tho' I think 'tis ridiculously objected against us, by the *Atheists*, and *Deists*, that some Faults have been found, in the best Versions of the Holy Scriptures, and that the sacred Original Text

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it self thro' the long Tract of Time. in which the Books of the Old and New Testament were committed to Writing, thro' the Ignorance, and Carelesness, and perhaps Design of some Transcribers, is liable to some few Exceptions; yet if we must reject and despise all Translations, because some are bad, and the best imperfect, I fear, we must immediately throw up our Bibles themselves, and grope after Truth, by no better Help, than that of the dim Light of Nature.

For all the Versions of the Holy Scriptures are allow'd to be the Works of Men, who were not immediately inspir'd by the Spirit of G O D, tho' we have Reason to believe, he was pleas'd to afford 'em more than ord'nary Direction, and Influence, in an Affair which had so great a Tendency, to the Welfare of the *Christian Church*, and ev'n to the happy and timely Conviction and Conversion of the most hardn'd Infidels, into whose Hands the Scriptures may fall, from Time to Time, and in which they made their serious, earnest, frequent, and more solemn Addresses, to *Almighty God*, for all that gracious Assistance, which he saw was necessary or convenient for 'em.

All the Versions, and the *Septuagint it Self*, (for correcting which, and comparing

paring it with the *Alexandrian Manuscript*, the World is beholden to the *Incomparably Learned, Indefatigable, and Judicious* Dr. Grabe) all the Versions, I say, were the Works of uninstructed Persons, who were liable to many gross Defects.

Nay, the *Greek and Hebrew* Text of Scripture, those sacred and refreshing Fountains of living Water, have been *shamefully polluted*, by *humane Additions* and *curst Innovations*, tho' God in his wise and holy Providence has preserv'd 'em, in all the Ages of the Church, so far *uncorrupted* in Spite, of all the Wit, Malice, and unweary'd Industry, of Men, and Devils, that they carry the lively and honourable Stamp of a divine Authority, and are still what they always were, a perfect Rule, both of Faith and Manners.

If then, we pay a more than ordinary Deference, to the *sacred Originals of the Holy Scriptures*, and if the small Errors, in a comparative Sence, which are found in all the Versions that were ever extant, ought by no means to shock our religious and firm Belief of the *Divine Inspiration* of those sacred, and most valuable Records, then I think, 'tis sufficiently evident, that Translations, in general, are of excellent and continual Use, and the Badness of some, and the Imperfections, which unavoidably attend

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attend 'em all, is no solid Argument against those which are good, or even such as are bad, if the *Original* was an Author who deserv'd to be translated, and so far as the Translator discovers his Affection, and does real Service to the Cause of Piety, Sence or Learning.

Another Objection that may be brought against Translations is this, that the injudicious, and illiterate shou'd not dare to intrude into those venerable Mysteries of the Empire of Reason, and Learning, which some are apt to imagine, 'tis their Prerogative, to consult, and to understand, and the entire Reputation and Advantage of which they think is a Debt, that ought only to be pay'd to Persons of their Character, and Distinction.

But many, who assume to themselves, the Title of Persons, who are *profoundly learned*, especially such whose Talent lies chiefly in torturing such Words as very seldom occur in Authors, whose Heads are living Dictionaries, or rather Libraries, the faithful but trifling Repositories of senseless Criticisms, which how great Satisfaction soever they may perhaps afford, to these eager and eternal Hunters of meer Words and Phrases, are of little use; I say, many such Persons have a much smaller Share, of *solid Reason*, than they whom these Tyrants

in the Empire of Learning would have to lie prostrate at their Feet.

Besides I can't for my Life conceive, why any Persons how learned so ever they may esteem themselves to be, how knowing soever they may be accounted by others, who have gon in the same tedious, if not unprofitable Track of Study, and what Skill soever they may really have, in reading uncommon and almost obliterated Characters, or comparing almost an infinite Number of Worm-eaten and voluminous Manuscripts, I say, I can't conceive, why such Persons shou'd desire, and endeavour to engross all the Learning in the World to themselves, make it serve like the *Egyptian Hieroglyphicks*, to amaze, but not instruct, or reform Mankind, and prevent the Generality of Men, from making Enquiries into Truth, which these fond Admirers of themselves represent, as a Thing that's vastly beyond their Reach, and the Honour of Knowing, which ought by no means to be prostituted to 'em.

For my Part, I confess, I cou'd never justifie, nor easily extenuate the common Practice of the *Popish Priests*, who forbid the Laity, to read ev'n the Holy Scriptures, which (if they are not render'd a *meer Nose of Wax*, by their *Humane Traditions*, and *wrong Interpretations*)

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tion;) are able, under the Influence of the Holy Spirit, to make the injudicious and illiterate, so wise as to secure the Salvation of their Souls, (tho' not fit to dispute, or manage an Intrigue, with subtil and designing *Jesuits*) and can warm their Hearts, with a much deeper Impression of the near Relation in which they stand both to GOD, and and to their Neighbour, and of those prudent Methods, which they ought to take, to perform their Duty, in the most pleasant and profitable Manner, than some, of the most learned Doctors of the *Sorbon* can modestly pretend to have.

And whether such Persons of Intrigue don't discover as much Ignorance, as *Antichristian Pride*, in taking these irregular Measures, to gain the Esteem, and command the Purles of the People, to support the Interest and raise the Reputation of the *Church of Rome*, which stands in Need of many pious *Cheats* to keep up it's *Aspiring* (and yet perhaps *sinking*) *Hierarchy*, is a Matter, that deserves to be tak'n into our serious and most deliberate Thoughts.

And tho' I firmly believe, that our Blessed Saviour has appointed an Order of Men, which shall continue, ev'n to the End of the World, to preach his Gospel, and administer his Holy Sacraments, and I earnestly desire, that my Tongue
may

may cleave to the Roof of my Mouth, if I don't prefer 'em before Multitudes of those, who, thro' the Influence of Satan, the *curst Policy* of the Church of Rome, the Disorder of their Bodies, their wretched Ignorance of the happy Settlement of the sacred Canon, or the Reputation they expect to gain, by affecting to make high Pretences, to *new Light*, and *immediate Inspiration*; yet I am far from thinking, that the Christian Religion was design'd to feed the boundless Ambition, and in so extravagant a Manner to raise the Reputation, and support the *External Grandeur* of the Clergy.

And if the Scriptures shou'd be frequently and seriously consider'd by all, to whom its Precepts, Promises, and Threatnings are directed, if the *designing Priests* of the Church of Rome are guilty of a notorious Crime, in pretending, that the common People shou'd n't dare, to intrude into those Sacred Mysteries, that are contain'd in 'em, if they ought to lye always open for the Information and Conduct of those, who most need their Assistance, then no pious, rational, and learned Authors shou'd be deny'd the *Lay*, but, like the Public Service, which they pay to Almighty God, shou'd be offer'd to their Consideration,

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in that Language which is most familiar to 'em.

I don't affirm, that they who would hinder Persons of mean Capacities, and inconsiderable, acquir'd Abilities, from enjoying the Satisfaction, and reaping the Advantage of learned Authors, are as guilty, as the *Romish* Priests, who deny the People, that Word which alone is able, by the Blessing of Almighty God, to make 'em holy in this World, and compleatly and eternally happy in the World to come; tho' I think, that they, who are eminent for Learning, may, with a much better Grace, affirm, that 'tis their Prerogative, to consult learned Authors, than the *Papish* Clergy can pretend, that the common People must be blind Votaries to the *Church of Rome*, that they must not understand the Language, in which their Divine Service is perform'd, and their Religion, and by consequence their Everlasting Salvation, must depend on the Qualifications, and Intention of those, who officiate for 'em.

But if 'tis the Duty of the common People to read the Word of God, and to perform all their Acts of Devotion, in the Language of their Native Country, if they, who are unable, to understand the Sacred and Original Text of Scripture, shou'd have the Bible
trans-

translated into a Language, that is familiar to 'em, this seems to me, to be a solid Argument, to prove, that any useful Original which they don't understand, in the Language in which the Author writ, shou'd be cloath'd in such a Dress, as may render it intelligible, and easie to 'em.

For my part, I am far from being bigotted to any ancient Authors, tho' I hope, they will be ever valu'd, in Proportion to that Vein of Sence, Learning, or Piety, which often runs, as it were, thro' the whole Body of their Discourse.

I am not such a Slave to Antiquity, as to judge it a Crime, to read the Writings of those Modern Authors, in which any Thing in its own Nature valuable, do's occur, and Sir *William Temple*, in his *Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, as Ingenious and Polite a Person as he was, and as much as I am charm'd with his Writings, do's pay, I think, too great a Defe-
✓
rence to the Ancients, and give too mean a Character of the *Modern Heroes*.

But whether Ancient or Late Authors do deserve the Preference, that the Encouragement of Translations shou'd be any Hindrance to the Reputation, and successful Progress ev'n of *Ancient Learning*, is, what I confess, after ma-
ture

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ture Deliberation, I am not able to conceive.

For as for those, who are entirely, and perhaps culpably ignorant of the Heroes of Antiquity, and have no Skill in any of the Learned Languages, 'tis impossible, that Translations shou'd lessen their Esteem for those Authors, who bear the awful Stamp of very distant Periods of Time.

Nay, this is so far, from being the true State of the Case, that I do not see, 'tis possible for the common People, to have any high and well-grounded Respect, for the genuine Monuments of Antiquity, but by Means of those very Translations, which they, who make the Objection, do most severely condemn.

'Tis true, they may hear it reported, that the Fathers of the *Primitive Church* were very pious, rational, and learned Writers, but their Knowledge, or rather Opinion, is not the natural Result of their own Examination, and Judgement, and, by Consequence, the Esteem which they have, and express for 'em, must be highly irrational, or at best uncertain, and extreamly superficial.

But when any of the Ancient and Learned Authors are, as it were, rais'd from the dead, and cloath'd in a Language,

guage, which they perfectly understand, and they have carefully perus'd a Translation of 'em, by one, who, as they have Reason to believe, did perfectly understand the Language, in which the Author writ, and was Master of the Subject, and whose Fidelity they have scarce a Temptation to suspect, they then begin, to entertain a very honourable Opinion of 'em, and thank the Translator, for saving 'em the Pains, of understanding, and consulting the Original.

And as for those, who have Skill, in the learned Languages, I don't see, that a Translation of any Ancient and Considerable Authors can do 'em any real Prejudice. For certainly the Translator must be void ev'n of common Sense, and very illiterate himself, if he desires 'em to pay a greater Regard to the Translation, than they ought to pay to the Original.

This wou'd be, to prefer the Stream before the Fountain, from which it proceeds, which wou'd be monstrously absurd, and can't fairly be suppos'd, in so Judicious and Learned an Age as this. And one, who understands the Languages, is so far from being hinder'd hereby, from the Study of 'em, or discourag'd from paying 'em a due Respect, that a Translation, if

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it be but tolerably perform'd, is a Help to him, in consulting the Original, and tends, to cultivate his Skill, in the learned Language, in which the Author writ.

Besides, we must consider, that no Translator, who has common Sense, will desire, that they, who are profoundly learned, shou'd lay aside the Original, for the Sake of a Translation; but only allow some Time, and take Pains to compare 'em, and see whether he has hit on the true Sense of the Author, and if he has really done so, the Translation must be valu'd of Course, unless the Original be esteem'd for nothing, but the Words; which I believe, no rational Person will ever be tempted to imagine.

I shall say no more of the Benefit and Necessity of Translations in general; but offer something concerning that Author, whom, I have, in Part, translated, with a due Regard, I hope, to the Glory of God, and the Publick Good, tho' whether I have perform'd well, or not, I must leave to the Judgment of the Learned, at whose Bar I shall think it an Honour to be arraign'd, if I have been guilty of any gross Defects, and whose Friendly Censures, I shall willingly, and ev'n thankfully undergo.

That

That *ORIGEN* flourish'd in the *Third Century*, and in the *Infancy*, if I may so say, of the *Christian Church*, is so generally known, that it seems almost needless, to mention it.

And since we deservedly, and cheerfully pay a Deference, to the living Monuments of Antiquity, and especially to those Pious and Learned Writers, who liv'd in the *Early* and *Pure Ages* of the Church, partly thro' a natural Curiosity, to know the Names, Characters, and Works of the most Eminent Persons, who flourish'd in such distant Periods of Time, partly thro' a Sense of those *Miraculous Methods*, which the Great God was, as it were, oblig'd to take for the Support and Encouragement of the Church, during its Minority, and partly from a just and deep Conviction, of the Eminent Piety, Profound Judgment, and Universal Learning of many of the *Primitive Fathers*, I think, a more than ord'nary Veneration shou'd be paid, to the Memory of the Deceased *ORIGEN*, and especially to his Books against the *Ingenious* and *Learned CELSUS*, which are a lively Picture of his Capacious and Exalted Genius.

Need I say any Thing in Commendation of his Piety, or rather, will not every Thing, that I can say, fall vastly

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short of the Dignity of the Awful
 Subject. Will it not in some Sense, and in
 some Measure, lose its native and al-
 most unsullied Lustre, by the faint
 Endomiums of the most elevated Mor-
 tals, who are inspir'd with a tremen-
 dous Sense of his *Majestick Simplicity*,
 and irresistible, and almost inimitable
 Charms? *And Piety*, which was so sincere, and
 so impatient of Restraint, that 'tis re-
 ported of him, that when his Honour'd
 Father was suffering under the Empe-
 ror *DECIUS*, he would, ev'n in
 his tender Years, have saluted the
 Flames of Martyrdom, with the great-
 est Readiness, and ev'n *Triumphant Joy*,
 had not his Dear and Honour'd Mo-
 ther, by her maternal Authority, Arts
 of Persuasion, and innocent Methods
 of Female Policy, clip'd the fluttering
 Wings of his humbly-aspiring Soul.
And Piety, discover'd, by denying ev'n
 the lawful Appetite of his sordid Flesh,
 and looking with a generous Disdain
 on the outward Grandeur, and perish-
 ing Vanities of this lower World.
And Piety, which was seen, by his
 Leaving, or, in a comparative Sense,
 Despising the School of *Plato*, that
 Celebrated Heathen Philosopher, for
 the Sake of the meek and persecuted
 JESUS.

JESUS In a Word, a *Piety*, which appear'd in the Tenor of his Life, and Conversation, the Strictness of his *Moral Vertues*, and *Christian Graces*, in the flaming but just Zeal he shew'd for the Cause of Christ, the exact Care and extraordinary Vigour, which runs thro' the Body of his most *Excellent Apology*, and the prudent Measures, which he took, to win others, to the sincere Belief and regular Practice of that Holy Religion, which was so constantly, so chearfully, and so brightly exemplify'd in himself.

Need I say any Thing of his Sence, who could n't content himself, without the *severe Study of Philosophy*, and the *sublime Notions* of the Divine *Plato*, in particular, and familiarly convers'd with the most judicious Philosophers among the *Pagans*, and greatly improv'd the refin'd and useful Knowledge; which he eagerly imbib'd, from those *Stars* in the *Firmament of Learning*, by lighting his Torch, if I may so say, at the dazzling Rays of the *Sun of Righteousness*.

Need I say any Thing of his *Learning*, who, on that Account, was justly the Wonder, and has too often been the Envy of the *Heathen* and *Christian* World, who by reason of his solid Sence, and uncommon acquir'd Abili-

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ties, was inclin'd, and qualify'd, to take an unconfin'd Range, thro' the immense Spaces of the *Intellectual Ether*, who by the Number, and Choice of the Books he publish'd, (of which *Eusebius* gives us an Account, in his *Ecclesiastical History*) discover'd at once the Regularity, and almost infinite Compass of his Studies, and by his Travels into Foreign Countries, was fully acquainted with the Posture of Affairs, both in the *Christian Church*, and in the Learned World?

I can't but take Notice, by the Way, that if *ORIGEN* had been so mean a Man, or his Works so dangerous, as Cardinal *Baronius*, Cardinal *Noris*, *Gretzerus* the *Jesuite*, and some others represent him, I wonder, that Pope *Anastasius*, a whole Council, the fore-mention'd Persons, and the whole *Justinian Age*, shou'd so violently oppose him.

I confess, after all that I have said, which is little, if compar'd with what I cou'd easily offer, in the Praise of *ORIGEN*, I dare not say, that St. *Hierom*, that very Learned Father, and afterwards the *Justinian Age*, and many Others since, had no Colour of Reason, for what they alledg'd against him.

Indeed, the Wisdom of God does very plainly appear, in so ord'ring Matters,

Matters, that ev'n some of the Sacred Penmen of Holy Scripture, and the Brightest Lights that ever shone in the Glorious Orb of the Church of God, had some Defects, to allay their intrinsic and apparent Worth, and prevent that Excessive Veneration, which wou'd otherwise have been paid 'em, by reason of their Natural and Acquir'd Accomplishments, the Honour they reflected on the Ages, in which they flourish'd, and the extraordinary Service, they did the Cause of Christ, and the Common Wealth of Learning.

But as the Translators of the Bible wou'd have been unjustly treated, had they been reproach'd with ev'n seeming to countenance, the false Notions of Things, which the Generality of the *Jewish*, and many of the Leaders of the *Christian* Church, are known to have entertain'd, or had they been upbraided, as if they approv'd of *David's* Murder and Adultery, and *St. Peter's* most shameful Denial of our Blessed Lord : So I may rationally expect, that the Reader will be so just and candid, as not to imagine (as great a Man as *ORIGEN* himself was, and as great a Heroe of *Antiquity*, and *Christianity*, as I know he was) that I'm so very ignorant, as to agree with him, in those Opinions, or Practices,

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which are evidently, and greatly liable to censure.

As for his Notion, that the *Devils may be recover'd*; I must confess, it seems to me to be both a false, and dangerous Position; false, because there's no Colour for it, that I can see, in the Word of God; and dangerous, because it has a Tendency to encourage Persons to go on in Sin, in Hopes, that ev'n the Fire of Hell will be at last extinguish'd, and be but a *Second Purgatory*. We know, that no less a Person, than the Late Most Reverend Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury* has publickly appear'd in its Defence, and has offer'd such *plausible Arguments*, that perhaps it may seem difficult to confute His Grace.

But as I have much more Reason to doubt, of my own Salvation, than of the Eternal Happiness of that *singularly Pious*, as well as *incomparably Rational*, and *very Learned Prelate*, so I am fully satisfy'd, that *ORIGEN* will be a *Star of the First Magnitude*, in the superior Orbs, and tho' his Notions might in some Respects be peculiar to him, and justly deserve our Censure; yet the chief Thing in us, which the Great God regards, and on which he will put distinguishing Marks of his Favour, thro' all the Revolutions of Eternity,

nity, is a regular and steady Course of sincere and unaffected Virtue, and Piety.

As for Off'ring Sacrifice to Idols, which *Petavius* the *Jesuite*, and other Learned Men, do seem inclin'd to charge on *ORIGEN*, and *Epiphanius* thought fit to relate, in his Book of *Heresies*, 'tis observ'd by the late Learned *Fredericus Spanhemius*, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, that that Act was never charg'd upon him, ev'n by the *Justinian Age*, in which he was more generally, and more violently oppos'd than ever.

But be that Matter as it will, *St. Hierom* himself, who strongly oppos'd his Errors, had no small Veneration for him, on the Account of his Piety, Sence, and Learning.

And the Late Reverend Dr. *Stillingfleet* in his *Origines Sacrae*, do's frequently quote, and honourably represent him to the World, as many of the greatest Lights of the *Christian Church*, and of the Learned World had done before him.

But I'm sensible, 'twill be readily objected against this Translation, that we abound already with Defences of the *Christian Religion*, which are much more useful, than *ORIGEN*, who makes it his Business, to confute *Celsus*, who was a Heathen Philosopher, 'Tis

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'Tis true, we have *Grotius de Veritate Christiana Religionis*, the Learned Apology of the late Reverend Bishop of Worcester, the most Admirable Sermons of the Famous Dr. Bentley, preach'd at the Lecture of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq; some incomparable Sermons publish'd by the Reverend Dr. Tillotson, Dr. Blackhall, Dr. Stanhope, and Mr. Clark, Chaplain to my Lord Bishop of Norwich, the Learned Dr. Owen's Comment on the Epistle to the Hebrews; And I cou'd hardly discharge my Conscience, shou'd I forbear to mention Mr. Baxter's *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, in Honour to the Memory of so Great, and especially so Good a Man. We have the Rational, and Learned Dr. Parker's *Demonstration of the Law of Nature*, and *Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures*; and many Excellent Authors, who have united their Forces against the most Formidable Adversaries of our Common Faith.

But certainly, 'tis impossible, to be too well furnish'd with Reasons of the Hope that is in us, and we ought to be so far from *Slighting* either the *Ancient Apologies* of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Tatian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and the like, or ev'n the Modern Defences of the *Christian Religion*, that I think,

think, we shou'd deeply lament that we have no more, and that those which we have, are no better understood, and it highly becomes us, to make a thankful and due Improvement, of those many Excellent Helps, which God, in his infinite Wisdom, and Goodness, sees fit to afford us.

I can think but of one Objection more, and that is this, that by Publishing this Translation of *ORIGEN*, I do expose the corrupt Principles of *Celsus* to more publick View.

'Tis true, I do so. But certainly the Truth is so safely guarded, by its Native Purity, and so well recommended by the Evidence that attends it, that 'tis so far from being afraid of the Light, that it desires nothing more, if I may so say, than to make its most open, and undisguis'd Appearance in the World; and if the Objection has any real Force, 'twill hold, as well, tho' not equally against *Origen* himself, for writing against *Celsus*, which plainly supposes, that all the Learning, Wit, and Malice of that Arch-Fiend of Hell must be dissected, as it were, and laid open to View, which tho' they are the rankest Poison, will never be able to infect us, if we have but the Blessing of Almighty God, on so Excellent an Antidote at hand,

28 *The Translator's Preface*

hand, as the indefatigable, and almost imitable Labours of that Pious, Rational, and Learned Father, who oppos'd him.

I shall say no more in Defence of a Translation of *ORIGEN*, but humbly submit my mean Performance, to the Censures of this Judicious, and Learned Age, and publish it as a publick, tho' unworthy Tribute of Praise, to the great Author of my Being, and Fountain of all my Happiness; and as some, tho' but a small Recompence, to my Dear and Honour'd Father, for the prudent Methods he has tak'n, the Pains, and Charge he has been at, and the great Readiness and unusual Joy, which he has always express'd, in Procuring, and Continuing to me, so far as it lies in his Power, under God, the extraordinary, but not duly improv'd Advantage of a Liberal Education.

I have frequently read the Eight Books of *Origen* against *Celsus*, as they offer'd themselves to my Consideration, in the *Greek Original*, the *French Translation* of the Learned *Monsieur Bouhe-reau*, and the *Latin Version*, and am not conscious to my self, of any wilful and gross Defect.

And

And after many Solemn Supplications for Divine Assistance, many tedious, and yet pleasant Hours, which I have employ'd about it, many kind Directions, and Encouragements, from Persons of no mean Rank for Piety, Sence, Learning, and Extraction, and many earnest Desires, that the Glory of God may be my principal Aim, and in a word, after having perform'd, what lies within the Compass of my small Ability, to cloath it, in such a Dress, as may recommend it to the World, I say, such as it is, I humbly expose it to all Learned, Judicious, and Candid Persons, and submit it to the Censure of the Criticks.

And if this First Essay shall meet ev'n with a tolerable Acceptation from the World, I design, God willing, to take the first Opportunity, to translate the Two following Books.

That the Advantage, which the Reader may reap from *ORIGEN*, may be equal, or superior, to the Painful Pleasure, which I took, in Translating him, that his Belief of the Christian Religion, may be daily confirm'd, and that he may at Length enjoy that inconceivable Happiness in the Future World, of which many of the

30 *The Translator's Preface*

the *Primitive Fathers* are now partaking, and of which, I firmly believe, that the Pious and Incomparable *ORIGEN* has no small Share, is the Sincere Desire, of

*The Unworthiest Servant
of our Common Lord,*

James Bellamy.

Origen

Origen against Celsus :

Translated from the

ORIGINAL
INTO
ENGLISH.

Book the First.

Origines against Celsum :

Translated from the

ORIGINAL

INTO

ENGLISH.

Book the First.

ORIGEN's
Epistle Dedicatory
 TO
 Ambrosius.

When false Witness was brought
 against our Blessed Saviour,
 he held his Peace, and when
 he was accus'd, return'd no Answer, being
 fully perswaded, that the Tenor of his
 Life and Conversation among the Jews,
 was the best Apology that cou'd possibly
 be made in his Behalf. But you, Virtu-
 ous Ambrosius, were pleas'd to desire me,
 for Reasons best known to your self, to
 vindicate the Christians from those foul
 Aspersions, which Cellius has publickly
 C cast

34 Origen's *Epistle Dedicatory.*

cast upon 'em, as if a Confutation of him were not legible in the Things themselves, and what he offers might not be deservedly rejected, as wanting ev'n the Appearance of Truth to recommend it to the World. To shew that our Saviour held his Peace when false Witness was brought against him, I need only at present, produce the Testimony of St. Matthew, which is confirm'd by what St. Mark the Evangelist relates. St. Matthew has these Words.

Mat. 26. Now the Chief Priests, and Elders, v. 59. and all the Council sought false Witness against Jesus, to put him to Death, but found none. Yea, though many false Witnesses came; yet found they none. At last came two false Witnesses, and said, this Fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days. And the High-Priest arose, and said to him, answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his Peace. We read in another Place of the same Evangelist, that our Saviour return'd no Answer to

Mat. 27. the Persons who accus'd him. And Jesus stood before the Governor, and the Governor ask'd him, saying, art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him; thou say'st. And when he was accus'd of the Chief Priests and Elders, he answered nothing.

Origen's Epistle Dedicatory 95

thing. Then says Pilate unto him, hearest thou not how many Things these witness against thee? And he answer'd him never a Word, infomuch that the Governor marvell'd greatly. And indeed it cou'd n't but be admir'd by Persons who were least capable of Reflection, that when he had so fair an Opportunity to free himself from the heavy Charge that was brought against him, to enumerate, or at least, modestly insinuate his shining Characters, and to commend the higher Powers, as being ordain'd of God, and by these innocent and politick Methods to procure the Judge's Favour, I say, that when he had so fair an Opportunity to do all this, he shou'd be so far from embracing it, as to look upon his most violent Accusers with a truly-generous Disdain.

That the Judge seem'd willing to acquit him, had he made his Apology, is plain from the following Words, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabas, or Jesus who is call'd Christ? And those Words, He knew that for Envy he had deliver'd him. So that the holy and spotless Jesus was scarce ever free from unjust and severe Accusations, as long as the perverse Dispositions of Men, whose Minds were corrupt, and whose Lives were often stain'd with the most gross Enormities, did remain the same.

36 Origen's *Epistle Dedicatory.*

as they have been in all the Ages of the World.

And ev'n now he holds his Peace, and makes no verbal Answer, but the unblemish'd Lives of his sincere Followers are his most chearful and most successful Advocates, and have so loud a Voice that they drown the Clamours of his most bigotted and most zealous Adversaries. I will, therefore, be so bold as to say, that by Publishing this Apology, I shall seem to lessen the Force of those powerful Arguments in Defense of the Christian Religion, which are drawn from the holy Lives of its pious Votaries, and are plain Appeals ev'n to Sense and common Observation. But that I might not seem backward in obeying the Commands you have laid upon me, I have endeavour'd, according to my present Abilities, to give a full, or at least, a sufficient Answer to all the material Objections which Celsus has brought against us, which, in your Opinion, my Dear and Respected Ambrosius, do strike at the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, but, I verily believe, will never shock the Faith of one, who by the Grace of God does live in the Profession of it with some measure of Sincerity. And God forbid that any of us shou'd have so embrac'd the Gospel (which is so lively a Declaration of his Love to perishing Sinners thro' the Merits of our
Blessed

Origen's *Epistle Dedicatory.* 37

Blessed and All-sufficient Redeemer)
as to be in Danger of receiving any bad
Impressions from Celsus's Discourse, or the
Writings of any other Ingenious and
Learned Person, who holds the same
Wicked Principles.

For St. Paul reckoning up those things,
which are apt to separate Mankind from
the Love of Christ (all which his Love
to 'em did, and will at last effectually,
and most gloriously overcome) don't say
that erroneous Discourses shou'd be any,
much less a principal Cause of this un-
happy Separation. Observe first he says,
Who shall separate us from the Love *Rem. 8.*
of God? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, *v. 25.*
or Persecution, or Famine, or Naked-
ness, or Peril, or Sword? (As it is
written, for thy sake we are kill'd all
the Day long, we are accounted as
Sheep for the Slaughter,) Nay, in all
these Things we are more than Con-
querors thro' him that loved us. Then
reckoning up another Set of Things, which
usually shock Mens Faith and Virtue, he
says, I am perswaded, that neither *ibid 38.*
Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Prin-
cipalities, nor Powers, nor Things pre-
sent, nor Things to come, nor Height,
nor Depth, nor any other Creature
shall be able to separate us from the
Love of God, which is in Christ Je-
sus our Lord. And there is just Ground

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even for us, who fall vastly short of the extraordinary Attainments of that great Apostle of the Gentiles, to say, Who shall separate us from the Love of God? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, nor Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword? But the Apostle who thought this too mean a Boast, for those who had arriv'd to so remarkable a Pitch of Virtue, as that to which he had attain'd, professes, That in all these Things he was more than a Conqueror; which Words have a peculiar Weight and Emphasis. And therefore, when he and the rest of his Noble Class come to make their Boast, they proceed to the second Set of Things, which are here enumerated, and can say with a holy Triumph, That neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So that I confess, I have no great Opinion of that Man's Christianity, whose Faith is in the least liable to be shock'd, either by this Book of Celsus, or the Writings of any other Person of the same unhappy Stamp. For really I'm at a Loss to know in what Class of Christians I shou'd rank that Man, who is not

Proof

Origen's Epistle Dedicatory. 39

Proof against all the bitter but unjust Reproaches, with which Celsus has loaded the Followers of our Blessed Lord. But because the common Sort of People are in no small Danger (as you imagine, my Dear Ambrosius) of turning Apostates from the Faith, since perhaps they may be shock'd by what Celsus has offer'd against the well-grounded Principles of our holy Religion; and I hope will be no less confirm'd in their Judgments, by what I shall seasonably produce in its Defence, provided I am able to confute his Errors, I resolv'd to obey your most just Command, and to return an Answer to the Book you were pleas'd to send me, the very Title of which, viz. A True Relation, will hardly pass for such with them, who are no great Proficients ev'n in the Philosophy of the Heathens.

St. Paul knowing there were many Things in the Greek Philosophy that were not in themselves contemptible, but had by Accident a malignant Influence on the Minds of Common People, representing Error under the plausible Appearance of solid and most important Truth, has these very Words, Beware Colos. 2. v. 8, lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy, and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ. But

40 Origen's *Epistle Dedicatory.*

this is more than I think, any judicious Person will allow the Book which I am just going to answer. For the Apostle calls the fore-mentioned Things by the Name of Vain Deceit, perhaps in Contradistinction to a certain Kind of Deceit which is not vain, but innocent and useful, which the Prophet Jeremiah considering, made bold to apply the following Words to the Great God himself;

Jer. 20. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and
 v. 7. I was deceiv'd; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevail'd. But, in my Opinion, what Celsus publish'd do's want ev'n that plausible Appearance, to render it worthy to be call'd deceitful, which is to be found in the Writings of those eminently-learned Persons, who were the Heads of the various Sects of Philosophers among the Pagans. And as in Geometry, 'tisn't sufficient that what is offered for a Demonstration, be in it self false and dangerous, but it must have some Colour of Truth, or it can never deceive, and engage ev'n the most faint Endeavours of one, who wou'd improve in that enterprising and useful Science: So those Discourses, which deserve the Character of Vain Deceit, must have some Affinity with those rational Arguments, that are frequently made Use of by the Heads of the several Sects of Philosophers.

When

Origen's Epistle Dedicatory. 41

When I had proceeded in my Answer to Celsus, as far as the Place where he personates the Jew discounting with our Blessed Saviour, I thought, 'twou'd be proper to put this Preface before my Book, that so any One into whose Hands it may accidentally fall, may plainly see, that I didn't principally intend it for those Christians, who are fully satisfy'd in their Judgment, but either for them who are entire Strangers to the Excellency of the Christian Religion, or for them who are weak in the Faith, as the Apostle calls 'em. Him that is weak in the Faith receive. Rom. 14.
V. 1.

I must add one Thing here; and that is this, that I have a different Design in answering Celsus in the gross, from what I had in Answering the Beginning of his Book. For at first, I design'd no more than to mention some of the Principal Heads, and content my self with a meer Compendium, But after mature Deliberation, I thought, 'twou'd be much more proper, to gather my Discourse, as it were, into a perfect System or Body. Then I was satisfy'd from the reason of the Thing, that I shou'd be at a needless Expence both of Time and Pains, and contented my self with what I had writ, against the Beginning of the Book, which Celsus publish'd.

But

42 Origen's Epistle Dedicatory.

But in the remaining Part of my Apology, which (if I may modestly say it of my own Performance) is much more elaborate, I determin'd to bend all my Forces against him, and to return a full Answer to every Thing that seem'd to be material, and ev'n to some of his most trifling Objections. I must, therefore, desire my Reader to discover a more than ordinary Candor in passing his Judgment on what I have done, especially on that Part of my Apology, which immediately follows this Epistle. And if the other Parts shou'd have no better Effect upon him, I hope, he will there also be extreamly favourable in the Sentence, which he may pass upon me.

And, if you, Virtuous Ambrosius, desire a more compleat Answer to Celsus, than that which I shall give him at present, I must refer you to them, who have a far greater Share of Judgment, than that to which I lay my most humble Claim, and are better qualify'd for the due and honourable Management of so difficult a Province. However that Person seems to me, to be in a safer and much more desirable Condition, who having met with Celsus's Performance, and being furnish'd by his own Experience with a warm and effectual Apology for that excellent Religion which he professes, and endeavours to practice to the utmost

of

Origen's *Epistle Dedicatory.* 43

of his Power, is so well-guarded by the Spirit of God, who dwells in the Heart of every sincere Follower of the Blessed JESUS, that he can look with a holy Contempt on the false Representations, and most plausible Arguments of the most Celebrated Hereticks that did ever appear in the World.

Origen

Officers of the Deductory.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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Origen against Celsus:

CHAP. I.

THE first Charge which *Celsus* brings against the *Christians*, is, *Their holding Cabals, contrary to the Law of the Land in which they liv'd, and to which, as he thinks, they ought to be entirely subject.* He distinguishes Meetings into Publick and Private, the Publick Meetings which were establish'd by Law, and the Private and Separate Meetings which were kept up by *Schismatics*. And his Design herein is to cast Reproach on the *Love Feasts* of the *Christians* (which were appointed to prevent a common and threatening Danger, and were far more binding, than the sacred Tye of mutual

mutual Oaths can be suppos'd to be) I say, he reproaches 'em, as if they manifestly and grossly interfer'd with that due and indispensable Loyalty, which, as they were Subjects, they ow'd, and ought, as he imagines, to pay the *National Establishment*.

Since, therefore, he makes his Boast that he has the Law on his Side, and wou'd intimate, that the separate Meetings of the Christians did countenance and promote *Schism* and *Sedition*; I answer, that as a Stranger, who has his Lot providentially cast among the *Scythians*, who are govern'd by most wicked Laws, and has not a fair Opportunity to make a safe Escape, wou'd be esteem'd by that ignorant and unciviliz'd People, as an Enemy to their Constitution, and a Favourer of the *Sectaries*, if he didn't comply with the *Canons of the Church*, but might still urge weighty and unanswerable Arguments to justify his *Separation*: So the Christians might lawfully dissent from the *Establish'd Religion*, which introduc'd Image-Worship, and a whole Ristaff of the Mock-Deities of the Heathens, and abounded with more horrid Impieties than were ever practic'd by the most barbarous Nations of the World.

For as the Inhabitants of a City may lawfully defend themselves against a Prince, who has made an unjust *Descent* upon their Native Country: So the *Christians* might warrantably violate the Laws of Satan, that great Usurper, to free themselves and Others from his worse than *Scythian* Tyranny.

CHAP. II.

THEN Celsus goes on, and asserts, That Judaism, with which the Christian Religion has a very close Connection, has all along been a barbarous Sect, tho' he prudently forbears to reproach the Christian Religion as if it were of a mean and unpolish'd Original; since he had commended the Barbarians, as being the Inventers of several excellent and very important Maxims, and he adds, That those Things which were indeed invented by the Barbarians, have been improv'd, and more accomodated to Moral Virtue by the Greeks. Now I think, I may justly take this Advantage in Defence of the Christian Religion from the very Concession which Celsus makes, to observe that one who leaves the

the Opinions and the Learning of the *Greeks*, and embraces the Doctrine of our *Blessed Saviour*, don't only assent to those Truths and useful Rules, which it recommends to his Consideration and Choice, but the more he's vers'd in the fore-mention'd Sort of Learning, the more he's confirm'd in his Judgment, and borrows from the *Christians* where-ever he perceives that the *Greeks* themselves are defective. To this I might add, that the *Christian Religion* may justly boast of a *peculiar Demonstration*, such a One as is *truly Divine*, and vastly exceeds all the Logick of the *Greeks*. The Apostle calls it *A Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*. *A Demonstration of the Spirit*, in as much as the Spirit of God do's in a *secret but powerful Way*, convince the Reader of the Truth of the *Scripture-Prophecies*, especially of those, which have an evident and near Relation to the *expected Saviour* of the World. And *of Power*, in as much as Miracles have been wrought to attest the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, some remarkable Footsteps of which do remain at this very Day, among those, who do what lies in their Power, under the Guidance and Influence of the Spirit of God, to live up to its holy Precepts.

CHAP. III.

THEN *Celsus* having spoke of the Private Meetings of the *Christians*, in which they exercis'd themselves and instructed one another in their particular Way, and having confess'd that one very politick Reason might be assign'd for what they did, *vis.* The Preventing of that severe Penalty, to which their Practice render'd 'em extremely liable, compares the Danger that threatn'd them with the Difficulties, and Calamities, to which *Socrates* and *Pythagoras*, and other *Heathen Philosophers* expos'd themselves, by maintaining the Reputation, and promoting the Interest of that comparatively-vain Philosophy, of which, they were the admir'd and truly-learned Professors.

But to this I answer, That the *Athenians* soon repented of what they had done to *Socrates*, nor did they long retain their Spite against *Pythagoras*. For the *Pythagoreans* had Schools for a considerable Time in that Part of *Italy*, which went by the Name of

D

Greece

Greece the Great. But the whole *Roman Senate*, the Emperors during the several Persecutions, the Soldiers, the common People, and ev'n they, who were nearly related to the Christians wag'd open War, as it were, against the Religion which our Blessed Saviour introduc'd, and wou'd easily, and quite have stop'd its happy Progress, if a Divine and Miraculous Power had not seasonably interpos'd, and made it overcome the whole habitable World, who exerted all their Malice, and us'd their utmost Endeavours towards its sudden and entire Extirpation.

CHAP. IV.

NOW let us see how *Celsus* reproaches the practick Part of our Religion, as containing nothing, but what we have in common with the Heathens, nothing that is *New*, or *Truly-great*.

To this I answer, That they who bring down the just Judgments of God upon their Heads by their notorious Crimes, wou'd never suffer by the Hand of Divine and Inflexible Justice,
if

if all Mankind had not some tolerable Notions of Moral Good and Evil.

Therefore we needn't wonder, that God, who is the common Father of his Creatures, shou'd plant in the Minds of Men those natural Principles, which the Prophets, and especially our Blessed Saviour do's so frequently impress upon the Minds of Men, that *So every one might be left without Excuse at the Day of Judgment, having had the Sence and Substance of the Law engrav'd upon his Heart in very legible Characters.*

This was obscurely represented to us by the Scripture, which speaks of God's Writing the Two Tables of the Law, as it were, with his Finger, and his giving 'em to *Moses*, and acquaints us, that they were afterwards broke by the Wickedness of them, who made the Golden Calf (as if it had been said, that they were broke by the Sins of Men) and that when the Law was writ the second Time on Tables of Stone, he deliver'd 'em to *Moses*, to signifie, that the Law which was defac'd by the Original Apostacy, shou'd be re-impress'd on the Minds of Men by the Preaching of the Gospel.

C H A P. V.

THEN *Celsus* speaking of Idolatry, do's himself advance an Argument, that tends to justifie and commend our Practice, when he says, *That the Christians can't think those to be Gods, which are made by the Hands of Men, and very often of such as are wicked, and unjust, and wallow in all manner of Debauchery.* Therefore, endeavouring to shew in the Sequel of his Discourse, that our Notion of *Image-Worship* was not a Discovery that was owing to the Scriptures; but that we have it in common with the Heathens, he quotes a Passage in *Heraclitus* to this Effect, "That they who pay Divine
 " Worship to inanimate Creatures, do
 " just as if they shou'd address and in-
 " vocate the Walls.

To this I answer, That since I have already granted that some common Notions of Moral Good and Evil are originally implanted in the Minds of Men, we needn't wonder that *Heraclitus* and Others, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, have publickly acknow-
 ledg'd

ledg'd to the World, that they held the very same Notion which we maintain.

And *Celsus* quotes a Passage in *Herodotus*, to shew, that the same Notion, which *Heraclitus* held, did obtain among the *Persians*. And I cou'd quote a Passage in *Zeno Citiensis*, who in his Book call'd *Πολιτεια*, says, "That the Building of stately Temples is altogether needless, and indeed ridiculous, since no Piece of humane Architecture, how pompous soever it may be, is truly sacred, and valuable in the Nature of the Thing it self". 'Tis plain, therefore, that this practical Notion is engrav'd in Divine and Legible Characters on the Minds of Men.

CHAP. VI.

THEN *Celsus* says, That all the Power which the Christians had, was owing to the Names of certain Demons, and their Invocation of 'em; tho' I can't well conceive, what shou'd induce, or ev'n tempt him, to talk at so extravagant a Rate.

I suppose, he obscurely hints at the Account we have, of some who cast out Devils. But this is a most notorious Calumny, for the Power which the *Christians* had, was not in the least owing to Enchantments; but to their Pronouncing the Name of *JESUS*, and making Mention of some remarkable Occurrences of his Life.

For by these, and no unlawful Means, have *Demons* been frequently dispossest'd, especially when the Person who pronounc'd that sacred Name, did it with a becoming Disposition of Mind, and with a most lively Faith. Nay, the Name of *JESUS* has had such Power over *Demons*, that sometimes it has prov'd effectual, tho' pronounc'd by very wicked Persons. To this our Saviour seems to have a Reference, when he says, *Many shall say*
 Mat. vii.
 V. 22. *to me in that Day, in thy Name we have cast out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works.*

And I know not, whether *Celsus* did omit this Passage thro' Ignorance, or rather thro' a voluntary and malicious Oversight.

CHAP. VII.

THEN he accuses our *Saviour* himself, as if he wrought Miracles by the Help of Magick, and foresaw, that many other Persons wou'd do the same Things, by their Skill in that Hellish Art, boasting that a Divine Power did attend 'em, and, for that very Reason, did exclude 'em from the Number of his Followers and Favourites.

And he makes Use of this Argument against him, *If, says he, there was just Ground for his rejecting the fore-mention'd Persons, then he was a wicked Man, being guilty of the same Fault, which he charg'd on them, and if he was not a wicked Man, then neither did they deserve a Mark of Infamy, who according to his own Confession, were to do the same Things that he did himself.*

But tho' we shou'd grant, that 'tis difficult for us to determine precisely, by what Power our *Saviour* wrought his Miracles; yet 'tis very plain, that the *Christians* made use of no Enchant-

ments, unless the *Name* of *JESUS*, and some Passages of the Holy Scriptures were a kind of *Sacred Spell*.

7.

CHAP. VIII.

THEN *Celsus* frequently and severely reproaches the *Christians*, with keeping their Opinions secret.

To this I answer, That they are more known, and more generally publish'd, than the admir'd Speculations of the Philosophers themselves, ev'n almost to the utmost Limits of the whole habitable World. For who, in a comparative Sence, is ignorant of our Saviour's Nativity, and Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment, in which he will reward the Righteous, and punish the Wicked, according to their Works? And are not many thousands of the very worst of Infidels acquainted with the Doctrine of the Resurrection, who turn it all into Banter and Ridicule? So that the Charge was altogether ungrounded, and by Consequence unjust. But if there be some *Arcana Imperii* in the Christian Religion, which are not fit to be communicated to the Vulgar,

it

it can't be deny'd, that there are the same in Philosophy. For ev'n the Philosophers held some Opinions which they kept more secret. Some of Pythagoras's Pupils rely'd on his bare Authority, and were satisfy'd with an *Ipse dixit*; Others were more privately taught, and instructed in those Things, which ought not to be prostituted to vulgar and unsanctify'd Ears. And many Rites in the Religion both of the Greeks, and Barbarians, are conceal'd from the Notice of the Vulgar.

CHAP. IX.

8

BUT Celsus seems with Abundance of Earnestness, to plead for them, who laid down their Lives in Confirmation of the Christian Faith, when he says, *I wou'd not perswade any one to renounce his Religion, by reason of the Dangers to which it may expose him; nor wou'd I have him ev'n seem to leave it; where he tacitly condemns all them, who are Christians in their Hearts, and yet publicly disown their Religion.*

Here

Here I may take Occasion to charge him, with the gross Inconsistency of his Discourse; for in some Places of his Book, he talks like a zealous Follower of the admir'd *Epicurus*, but here, that his Accusation may carry the more plausible Appearance, he dissembles his Opinions, and seems to hold, that there is in Man, besides his Body, which is material and earthly, another and much nobler Substance, that has an Affinity with God himself, and says, *That they, who have Souls duly dispos'd, do, as far as the Frailty of their Nature will admit, aspire to a Participation of the Nature of God, to which they are so nearly ally'd, and are never more highly pleas'd, than when they are seasonably and solidly entertain'd with Discourses concerning the Supream and Adorable Majesty both of Earth and Heav'n.*

Observe, a little before he said, *He wou'dn't perswade any one to renounce his Religion, by reason of the Dangers, to which it may expose him, nor wou'd he have him ev'n seem to leave it; and yet he's grossly guilty of the same Fault himself, which he severely condemns in others.* For he knew very well, that if he had openly profess'd he was an *Epicurean* Philosopher, his Accusation wou'd be little regarded by them, who live in the firm Belief
of

of an over-ruling Providence, tho' indeed they may differ from one another in their Sence and Explications of the Principles, which they are known to hold.

By the Way I'm inform'd, there have been two Persons, who went by the Name of *Celsus*, and both of 'em were Philosophers of the *Epicurean Sect*; One who liv'd in the Reign of the Emperor *Nero*, and another, who liv'd in the Reign of the Emperor *Hadrian*, and some Time after. The latter of these is the Person, with whom I am at present concern'd.

CHAP. X.

9

AND he continues his Discourse, and advises us to *embrace no Opinions, but under the Conduct of impartial Reason, on the Account of the many and gross Errors, to which the contrary Practice will shamefully, and unavoidably expose us.*

And he compares those Persons, who take up any Notions without due Examination, to the designing Priests of *Mithras*, *Bacchus*, *Cybele*, or *Hecate*, or any other *Mock-Deity* of the Heathens.

For

For as these Impostors having once got the Ascendant over the common People, who were grossly ignorant, cou'd turn and wind these harmless Cattle, as their Interest or Fancy might direct: So, he says, the very same Thing was known to be the common Practice of the Christians.

x Some of 'em, says he, neither examining what it was that they believ'd; nor caring to be examin'd, wou'd use this Expression, don't examine into Matters, but believe; and thy Faith will infallibly save thee, and wou'd frequently say with an Air of affected Gravity, that the Wisdom of this World is very dangerous, and mischievous, but Folly is a most admirable and
x useful Thing.

To this I answer, that if all Men cou'd conveniently leave the Concerns of Life, and had Leisure and Inclination to bend their Minds to the Study of Philosophy. I shou'd heartily wish, that this might become a Universal Practice, tho' (to speak modestly, and to keep within due Compass) I think, I may safely say, that the sublime Doctrines of the *Christian Religion*, the short Hints of the *Jewish Prophets*, our *Saviour's Parables*, and abundance of other Things that are Symbolically deliver'd, and propos'd with the Sanction of a Law, are not more involved, and attended

attended with greater Obscurity, than many of the Opinions which are advanced and maintain'd by the Philosophers themselves. But if the Method which I have mention'd, and before recommended, be impracticable, partly by Reason of Men's natural Incapacities, who, for the most Part, are very unfit to apply their Minds to Learning, and partly by Reason of the necessary and unavoidable Cares which attend Humane Life, what better Way cou'd any one have contriv'd, and tak'n, more suited to the Genius, and outward Circumstances of the common People, than that which our *Blessed Saviour* took, for the Conversion of a degenerate World? And as for the vast Numbers of Persons, who have left those horrid Debaucheries, in which they formerly wallow'd, and have profess'd to embrace the *Christian Religion*, I ask, which of the two Methods conduces most to their Advantage, and has the most natural and remarkable Tendency to the general Benefit of the Humane Race, to reform their Manners, from a Sense of those most grievous Torments, which the just God will be, as it were, constrain'd to inflict upon the wicked, and of that bright and massy Crown, which waits for the Righteous, and which they will

will receive, when this frail and short Life is ended, tho' they don't stand to examine the Grounds on which their Faith is built, according to the strict Rules of Art, or to defer their Conversion, 'till they have a fair Opportunity, and Capacity, to apply themselves to rational, and learned Studies?

For Experience may convince us, that very few, in a comparative Sence, will advance ev'n so far as this, and reap the Benefit of yielding a naked, but well-grounded Assent to the Truths of the *Christian Religion*; but instead of that, the greatest Part of Mankind are fully bent upon a vicious Course of Life.

CHAP. XI.

THE Love of God therefore, in sending his Son into the World, do's very plainly appear, in accommodating Matters to the Circumstances of Humane Life, that so the Gospel might be of more general Advantage to the World, and this is none of the least Powerful Arguments, to prove that our *Blessed Saviour* had

a Divine Commission: For, if a Man, who has any Manner of Religion, will readily acknowledge, that a Physician, who recovers sick Persons, is sent from God, tho' the Cure do's extend no farther than the Bodies of his Patients, much more must we acknowledge, that our *Saviour* was indeed sent by the Father, who has recover'd so many Thousands of Persons from spiritual, and more dangerous Distempers, has improv'd the Faculties of their Minds, and prevail'd with 'em, to depend upon the Will, and Providence of God, to refer all their Actions to the pleasing of him, and to use their utmost Care, lest they incur his just and severe Displeasure, by Thought, Word, or Deed; and since our Adversaries are continually making such a Stir, about our taking Things on Trust, I answer, that we who see plainly, and have found the vast Advantage, that the common Sort of People do manifestly, and frequently reap thereby, who make up by far the greater Number, I say, We, who are so well advis'd of these Things, do professedly teach *them* to believe, without a *severe Examination*, who can't neglect their worldly Business, and spare Time enough, to make long and exact Enquiries into the Grounds of our Holy Religion.

And

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And our Enemies themselves, tho' they wo'n't confess it, do the very same Thing, by which we incur their Censure. For when any one of them, do's first devote his Time and Strength to the Study of Philosophy, and either by some unexpected Accident, or the Tutor, who is first recommended to his Choice, is determin'd to fall in with a particular Sect; don't he take it for granted, that he has pitch'd on the most happy Method? For he do'sn't stay 'till he has heard, and weigh'd the Arguments, that may be brought for one Sect, and against another, and so at last choose to be a *Stoick*, *Platonick*, *Peripatetick*, or *Epicurean* Philosopher, or the like. For, 'tis by a certain Impulse, in which Reason is little or not at all concern'd, that the Preference is frequently given to the *Stoick* Philosophy, for Instance, and the *Platonick* is despis'd, as being less sublime than the rest; and the *Peripatetick*, as giving too great an Indulgence to humane Frailty, and representing, more than any other Sect, those Things to be truly 'good, which are generally, but very unjustly reputed to be so.

And there are some, who being, as it were, thunder-struck, at the very mention of an over-ruling Providence, by reason of its unequal Distribution
of

its Favours, as they imagine, do rashly deny that there is any such Thing, and fondly embrace the corrupt and wild Notions of *Epicurus*. If, therefore, according to the Dictates of Reason, we must joyn our selves to some Sect of Philosophers or other, either among the *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, without weighing all the Arguments which may be brought on either Side; how much more just and reasonable is it, that we shou'd believe him who is *GOD over all*, and our Blessed Saviour, who teaches, that this *God alone* is to be worshipp'd, and that we shou'd raise our Minds above those Things, which can hardly be said to have a true Existence, or at best are very improper Objects of Divine Adoration?

'Tis true, that only one, who makes Use of *Reason* and *severe Study* in examining the Principles he holds, is capable of building his Faith on *rational Demonstration*.

But since we are forc'd to take many Things on Trust, ev'n in the most common and necessary Affairs of Humane Life, is it not highly agreeable to the Dictates of solid Reason, that we shou'd immediately and firmly believe in God, and in him alone? Who is there that goes by Sea, marries, performs the Conjugal Act, or sows

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his Ground, that will not hope the best, tho' nothing is more common than to meet with frequent and great Disappointments?

And if in our ordinary and daily Concerns, we overlook the uncertain Events of Things, and are encourag'd by the pleasing Prospect which our Faith and Hope do already give us, how much more Reason is there for one, who puts his Trust in God, to expect the desir'd Success of any important Action, than there is for one who goes by Sea, or is employ'd in any worldly Affair, I say, how much more Reason is there for such a One, to place his entire Confidence in God, the glorious Creator of the spacious Universe, and in our Blessed Saviour, who in his infinite Wisdom, thought it fit to recommend his excellent Doctrine to the whole habitable World, by suffering for Mankind not only cruel Persecutions; but also a Death, which in some Sence, was highly ignominious, and by his own most Heroick Example, at once taught and encourag'd the first Publishers of the Gospel boldly to encounter the greatest Difficulties, and the most apparent Dangers, if they might but be honourably and happily instrumental to save precious and immortal Souls.

CHAP. XII.

THEN Celsus says, *If they will return a solid Answer to some pertinent Questions, which I shall fairly propose to 'em (not as if I were unacquainted with the Opinions, which they hold, but because I love to cherish the tender Concern, which I naturally have for the Good of Mankind in general) 'twill be very well. But if they refuse to comply with this most reasonable, and highly necessary Request which I make to 'em, and run into their Common Cant, and say, Don't examine into Matters, but believe; sure 'tis fit at least, that they shou'd be so civil, as to tell me what Notions they advance, and whence their Original was deriv'd.*

To which I answer, that those Words, *Not as if I were unacquainted with the Opinions which they hold;* do not a little favour of his usual Presumption.

For if he had read the Prophets, which are full of very obscure Hints, mystical Representations, and Expressions, that every One don't easily, or

perhaps tolerably understand, and if he had carefully, and candidly read the Parables, that are scattered up and down in the Gospels, and those Parts of Scripture, which contain the *Jewish Law and History*, and if having read the Writings of the Apostles without a Tincture of Prejudice, he had put himself in a Capacity of understanding their genuine Meaning, and full Design, he wou'dn't, with such an Air of Confidence, have boasted, that he was perfectly acquainted with all the Opinions which the Christians hold.

For no Divine, ev'n among ourselves, whose constant, laborious, and almost entire Employment it is, to be conversant with those sacred Writings, do's dare to talk with such an Air of Vanity. Nor do any of us pretend to a perfect Acquaintance with the Opinions of *Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus*, or the *Stoicks*, when ev'n they, who have undertak'n to interpret the Writings of these famous Philosophers, are so unhappy as to differ among themselves, and quarrel with each other.

But perhaps *Celsus* might borrow this bold Expression from some ignorant People, who were not sensible, that indeed they knew nothing at all, and I'm apt to think, that these were the profound

found Doctors, if the Truth was known, to whom he's indebted for that comprehensive Knowledge, of which he makes his Boast.

And to me, he seems to do just like one, who travelling into *Egypt* (where the learned Clergy talk very Philosophically concerning their sacred Rites, but the common People are wonderfully pleas'd with hearing some dark Fables related to 'em, the rational Account of which they don't in the least understand) do's immediately hereupon imagine, that he's perfectly acquainted with the Learning and Religion of the *Egyptians*, tho' he never convers'd in a familiar manner, with any of their Priests, or with any Persons that, explain'd to him what is signify'd by their mysterious *Hieroglyphicks*. And what I have said of the *Egyptians*, may as well be said of the *Persians*, *Syrians*, *Indians*, and all other Nations that veil their Religion, as it were, with significant, but very mysterious Ceremonies.

C H A P. XIII.

BUT since *Celsus* has laid this down as one of the Maxims of the Christians, that the Wisdom of this World is very dangerous and mischievous; but Folly is a most admirable and useful Thing: I answer, he don't fairly represent the Words of the Apostle *Paul*, which run after the following Manner, *If any Man among you seems to be wise in this World, let him become a Fool that he may be wise, for the Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.*

1 Cor. iii. V. 18. He don't simply say, that *Wisdom is Foolishness with God*, but prudently confines his Discourse to the Wisdom of this World, and don't simply say, *If any Man among you seems to be wise, let him immediately become a Fool*; but *If any Man among you seems to be wise in this World, let him become a Fool, that he may be wise.*

By the *Wisdom of this World*, I understand that *vain Philosophy*, in a comparative Sence, which the Scripture do's

do's so justly, so frequently, and so severely condemn. And so Folly is a most admirable and useful Thing, not strictly consider'd, but in this limited Sense, when a Person becomes a Fool in the Esteem of this vain and degenerate World.

'Tis just the same Thing, as if any one shou'd say, that the *Platonicks*, who believe the Immortality of the Soul, and the Doctrine of its Transmigration, have embrac'd ridiculous Opinions; that is, they are such in the Judgment of the *Stoicks*, who endeavour to overthrow it, and of the *Peripateticks*, who insult over *Plato*, as if he were a Mad-man; and of the *Epicureans*, who reproach them that believe a God, and an over-ruling Providence, as being the unhappy Authors of all the wild Superstition, that was ever brought into the World.

And if there were Occasion, I cou'd make it appear, that tho' 'tis much better for them, who have Opportunity, and Capacity, to build their Faith on rational and convincing Arguments, than to take Things on Trust; yet our Blessed Saviour wou'd have Persons of mean Capacities, and under some peculiar Circumstances, to believe without a severe Examination, since otherwise we can't suppose, that the Gospel

would be of any Advantage to 'em.
 So much is intimated by St. Paul in
 1 Cor. i. the following Words, *After that in the*
 V. 21. *Wisdom of God, the World, by Wisdom*
knew not God, it pleas'd God by the
Foolishness of Preaching to save them that
believe.

Hence it is plain, that in the Wisdom
 of God the World ought to have known
 him, and because they so grossly fail'd
 herein, it pleas'd God to save them
 who believe in the fore-mention'd Way,
viz. By the Preaching of a Doctrine,
 which was Foolishness in the Judg-
 ments of many thousands, ev'n of ju-
 dicious and learned Persons. St. Paul
 himself was not ignorant of this, when
 1 Cor. i. he us'd these Words, *We preach Christ*
 V. 25. *crucify'd, to the Jews a Stumbling-*
Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness;
but to them who believe, both Jews and
Greeks, the Wisdom of God, and the
Power of God,

C H A P. XIV.

AN D since *Celsus* has reckon'd up several Nations who agree in their Opinions, and (I know not for what Reason) leaves out the *Jews*, as if they held none, that did bear the least Resemblance with those which the rest of the World maintain'd, I wou'd ask him, why he believes the Accounts which are giv'n by the Historians, both among the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, and disbelieves what is frequently, and credibly related in the *Jewish History*.

For if all other Historians have giv'n a faithful Account of the Antiquities of the several Nations from which they sprung, why shou'd the *Jewish* Writers be the only Persons in the World suspected of gross Deceit? And if *Moses* and the Prophets have said many Things in Favour of the *Jews*, may not the very same Thing be charg'd upon all, or far the greatest Part of prophane Historians. Must we give Credit to the Annals of the *Egyptians*, which repre-
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sent the *Jews* as a strange Sort of People, and believe, that all that the *Jews* say against the *Egyptians*, viz. That they treated 'em in a most barbarous Manner, and for that Reason were justly and severely punish'd by God, is a ridiculous Fable? I might say the same Thing of the *Assyrians*, who, if we may believe their own Historians, were anciently engag'd in long and bloody Wars with those of the *Jewish* Nation. And the *Jewish* Writers (for perhaps I shou'd be thought to speak from Prejudice, if I shou'd call 'em Prophets) make frequent Mention of their Wars with the *Assyrians*.

See therefore, how *Celsus* is led aside by Prejudice, which he's so ready to charge others with, when he readily believes some Nations to be extreemly wise, and highly esteems their Histories, as being entirely authentick, and condemns those of other Nations as being false, and void ev'n of common Sence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Observe his Words,

TIS an Opinion, says he, *that is generally receiv'd by the Ancients, in which not only some few wise Men, but entire Nations, and those not a little remarkable for Sence and Learning, have readily and unanimously agreed.*

He took special Care not to reckon the Jews among the wise Nations of the World, as if they were vastly inferior in respect of Wisdom to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Indians, Persians, Oarysa, Samothracians, and the Eleusinii.

But how much do's Numenius the Pythagorean deserve to be prefer'd before him, who has made his Name immortal by his uncommon Eloquence, has tak'n such Care in his impartial Enquiries into Truth, and heap'd up so many good Authorities to confirm his excellent and elaborate Notions? This learned Author in his Book *μεταφυσικῆ* speaking of those Nations, that held God to be incorporeal, has reckon'd the Jews among 'em. He also makes

makes mention of some Passages in the Writings of the Prophets, which he takes in an Allegorical Sence.

'Tis reported also, that *Hermippus* in his first Book *μετ' ερωτησεων* acquaints us, that *Pythagoras* borrow'd his Philosophy from the *Jews*, and taught it to the *Greeks*, and there is extant *Hecataeus's* History of the *Jews*, wherein he do's so highly commend the Wisdom of that People, that *Herennius Philo* in a Book, that he has writ concerning 'em, seems inclin'd to think it spurious, and afterwards says, that if it be really genuine, tis probable, he was inwardly a Convert to the Religion which they profess.

16 But I wonder in my Heart how it comes to pass, that *Celsus* shou'd reckon up the *Odryse*, *Samothracians*, *Eleusinii*, and *Hyperborei*, as being famous at once for their Wisdom, and Antiquity, and make no mention of the *Jews*, for the *Egyptians*, *Phœnicians*, and *Greeks*, do by their own History, give sufficient and ample Testimony to the Antiquity of that People, which, I thought, 'twas needless for me to produce. For any one, that reads *Josephus's* two Books of the *Jewish* Antiquities, may see there a long Catalogue of Authors, who confirm the Truth of this Matter by their concurring Testimony. And *Tatian*, who

who writ after him, has made a learned Discourse against the *Gentiles*, wherein he quotes abundance of Authors, who have writ concerning the *Antiquity* of the *Jews*, and of *Moses* in particular.

So that *Celsus* seems to me to talk at this extravagant Rate, rather from implacable Malice, than out of Zeal for Truth, designing to reproach the Christian Religion (which has so close a Connection with that of the *Jewish* Nation) on the Account of its Original, which he supposes to be late and mean. And he says, that the *Galatophagi* of *Homer*, the *Druids* of the *Gauls*, and the *Geta* (who agreed with the *Jews* in some Opinions, but have no Writings extant, that I know of) are remarkable for their Wisdom and Antiquity. But he levels all his Malice at the *Jews*, and will neither allow 'em to be wise nor ancient.

Then giving us a Catalogue of wise and ancient Persons, who were useful to their Contemporaries by their bright Example, and to Posterity by their admirable Writings, he has purposely left *Moses* out of the Number of Men remarkable for their Wisdom, tho' *Linus*, who is put at the Head of 'em, has left behind him no Laws, nor Books, for the Regulation of Societies, or Reformation of Manners, whereas

whereas *Moses's* Laws are diligently observ'd by an entire and populous Nation, by whose Means they have been diffus'd, almost thro' the whole habitable World.

Take Notice therefore, of the unaccountable Malice by which *Celsus* is acted, who says nothing of *Moses*, but mentions *Linus*, *Musæus*, *Orpheus*, *Phe-recydes*, *Zoroaster* the *Persian*, and *Pythagoras*, with abundance of Honour, as having giv'n wise and wholesom Precepts to Mankind, and tak'n prudent and due Care to transmit 'em to Posterity by their Writings, which are extant at this very Day.

And I suppose, he designedly omitted to speak of the ridiculous Fables (especially in the Writings of *Orpheus*) which attribute humane, and ev'n exorbitant Passions to their pretended Deities.

CHAP. XVI.

17

THEN he finds great Fault with the *Mosaical* History, and can't bear, by any Means, that it shou'd be tak'n in an Allegorical Sence. But one might ask this mighty Man (who calls his Book by the Name of *A True Relation*) how it comes to pass, that he's able to discover the most profound Mysteries in the strange Accidents, which according to his own admir'd *Poets* and *Philosophers*, have befall'n his Gods and Goddeses, which have been polluted with Incest, have contended with their Fathers and made 'em *Eunuchs*, and done many immodest Actions of the like Nature (which might be mention'd, if Occasion offer'd) but when *Moses* don't say any Thing that is comparable to this, of the great God whom he ador'd, or of the Angels, or of Men (for he don't represent ev'n them, as making such a bold Attempt as that of *Saturn* against his Father, or that of *Jupiter* against *Saturn*, or that of the Incest, which

which the Father of the Gods and Men committed with his Daughter) *Celsus* treats ev'n the famous Lawgiver of the *Jews*, as a notorious and shameful Impostor, and takes the People, who are govern'd by his Laws to be weak, and extreamly credulous. Here he seems to me to act like *Thrasymachus* in *Plato*, who will not suffer *Socrates* to state his Notion of Justice, but says, *Have a Care how you say, that Expediency, or Decency, or any such Thing is Justice.* For reproaching, as he thinks, the *Mosaick* History, and blaming them severely, who take it in an Allegorical Sence, tho' he acknowledges, that of the two they are more pardonable, than they who literally interpret it; and having form'd his Acculation to his Mind, he wou'd deny us the just Liberty of making our own Apology.

18 But we openly challenge any Person who may espouse his Cause, to set Author against Author, and may address our selves to him after the following Manner, Pray Sir, be pleas'd to produce the Poems which were writ by *Linus*, *Musæus*, and *Orpheus*, and the History which was publish'd by *Pherecydes*, and compare 'em with the Laws which *Moses* gave to the *Jewish* Nation; Examine which have the greatest, and most general Influence on

on the Minds of Men, and impartially consider how few of the Writings of those celebrated Authors, which you have reckon'd up, had any tolerable Effect, especially on the common People, since, according to your own Confession, they were design'd for them, who were capable of understanding Allegories. Whereas *Moses* acted the Part of a Skillful and Divine Orator, who makes use of Expressions that admit of different Sences, neither giving the Laity among the *Jews* a Handle for the least Irregularity in their Morals, nor wanting Matter for the sublime Speculations of those who are more judicious, learned, and inquisitive.

And I don't see, I confess, that the Works of your Poets, with all their Wisdom, are preserv'd, what Service soever they might do the Publick. But the Books of *Moses* have prevail'd with them, whose Opinions and Customs, are vastly different from those which obtain among the *Jewish* Nation, to believe, that according to the Account he gives, the Laws which are contain'd in 'em, were giv'n him by the great God himself, the glorious Creator of the spacious Universe. For 'twas agreeable to the Dictates of his infinite Wisdom, that since it was his Will to give Laws to the World, they

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shou'd

thou'd carry along with 'em that Force and Efficacy, without which 'twas impossible for 'em so readily, and so universally to obtain.

This, I say, not examining at present, what has an immediate Relation to our Blessed Saviour; but contenting my self with what relates to *Moses*, who, tho' he came infinitely short of the Holy and Unspotted J E S U S, did vastly excel your most Celebrated Heroes, whether *Poets*, *Historians*, or *Philosophers*.

CHAP. XVII.

19

THEN *Celsus* being desirous, and ev'n eager, to cast an oblique Reflection upon the Account, which *Moses* gives of the Creation of the World, according to whom it wants a great Deal of the Duration of Ten thousand Years, discovers himself, tho' he do's what he can, at the same time, to conceal, or dissemble his Opinion, to be one of them, who hold the Eternity of the *Material* World.

Any

Any judicious Person may justly, and easily infer this from that Passage of his, *There have been, says he, in all Ages of the World, many Conflagrations, and Inundations, the last of which was Deucalion's Flood, and that is of no early Date.*

Let him therefore, especially since he blames the Christians, for not building their Faith on rational and solid Grounds, acquaint me, what Demonstrative Arguments do of Necessity induce him to believe, that *There have been several Conflagrations and Inundations, and that Deucalion's was the latest Flood, and Phaeton's Conflagration the latest that has ever happen'd.* And if he refers me to *Plato's Dialogues* concerning those Matters, I shall return him the following Answer, that we have Reason to believe, that the virtuous and refin'd Soul of *Moses*, which was rais'd above all sensible Objects, and all created Beings, and had its entire and firm Dependence upon God, was fill'd with the Holy Spirit, who enabl'd him to set Divine Truths in a much clearer Light than *Plato*, or any of the ancient Sages, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*.

But perhaps he may demand of us, what rational Grounds we have for such a Belief as this. If so, let him first give us his Reasons for the Opi-

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nion which he holds, and advances, ev'n without the Shadow of a Demonstration, and then I'll undertake, that he shall soon be acquainted with the Grounds, on which our Faith in this Affair is built, tho' I can't but take Notice, that solely against his Will, he confess'd the World was of a modern Date, and not of the Duration of Ten thousand Years, when he said, *That these remarkable Events were esteem'd ancient by the Greeks, because the Conflagrations and Inundations have been Means to bury in Oblivion, many considerable Events of much greater Antiquity.*

But let him, if he pleases, support his fabulous Account of Conflagrations and Inundations, by the Authority of the *Egyptian* Doctors, who, in his Opinion, were the wisest Men that were ever born into the World, some Footsteps of whose profound Wisdom may be seen, in their paying Divine Worship to the Brute Beasts themselves, and in those very Arguments, which they bring to justify and recommend the Symbolical Rites, that are made use of in the RELIGION of their Country.

The *Egyptians* forsooth, who endeavour to give some Colour of Reason for their mystical Ceremonies, by their
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Theological Speculations, must pass for Men of most admirable Wisdom, but one, who in Observance of the *Jewish* Law, refers every Thing to the Blessed *G O D*, of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom are all Things, is more ignorant (if we may give any heed to *Celsus*, and Men of his unhappy Principles,) than they, who don't only dishonour the Deity, by paying divine Adoration to Creatures endu'd with Reason, but ev'n by paying it to those which are inanimate, under a Pretence of I know not what imaginary *Transmigration* of the *Soul*, which they make to descend from Heav'n, and pass into the Bruits, ev'n into those of 'em, which are of the most savage and cruel Disposition.

And it seems the *Egyptians*, who hide their Religion under the sacred Veil of significant, but obscure Figures, do challenge from us the profoundest Reverence, but *Moses* forsooth, who has writ a faithful and useful History of the *Jewish* Nation, and left 'em wholesome Laws for the Regulation of their Conduct, both in a private and publick Capacity, has only, in the Judgment of *Celsus*, and the *Epicureans*, amus'd 'em with empty and ridiculous Fables, that will not admit, ev'n of an Allegorical Interpretation.

CHAP. XVIII.

THEN he says, That Moses having borrow'd his Opinions from this wise and eloquent People, meaning the Egyptians, got himself a prodigious and unaccountable Name. To which I answer, that 'tis no Wonder at all, if Moses borrow'd some Notions from the Wise Men that liv'd in Egypt before him, and introduc'd 'em, with some little Difference, or great Improvement among his Country-men the Jews.

And without all doubt he deserves to be blam'd severely, if he has advanc'd such Notions as bear neither the Characters of Truth, nor Wisdom, but if he has embrac'd and taught those Opinions, which, according to Celsus's own Confession, are both true, and wise; I can't conceive that he has done any Thing, whereby he might justly incur his Censure.

I wish, with all my Heart, that Epicurus, and Aristotle, who do's not so directly, and so grossly deny an overruling Providence as the other do's, I say, I wish, with all my Heart, that they

they and the *Stoicks*, who hold that God is corporeal, had been instructed in that Heav'nly Doctrine, that was deliver'd by *Moses*, that the World might not so much abound, as it do's, with Authors that absolutely deny a Providence, or confine it within very narrow Bounds, or introduce a corporeal and corruptible Principle, inso-much that the *Stoicks* hold God himself to be nothing more than Matter, and are not asham'd to acknowledge that he undergoes the various Changes to which Bodies are subject, or that if he is so happy as to be incorruptible, 'tis for no other Reason, but because there's no Object from without, that has any Power to corrupt him.

But the *Jewish* and *Christian* Doctrine, which preserve the pure Nature and Immutability of God inviolable, is esteem'd impious by *Celsus*, because 'tis most directly repugnant to those extravagant Notions, which greatly derogate from the infinite Honour, that is due to the Supream and Adorable Majesty, and teaches us when we address the Throne of Grace, to say, *Lord, thou art always the same*, and represents God acquainting us, that he never changes.

Ps. l. cii. v. 27.

Mal. iii. v. 6.

Then *Celsus*, not condemning Circumcision, which is in use among the *Jews*, says, *They borrow'd that Custom from the Egyptians*, and gives greater Credit to the latter than he does to *Moses*, who assures us, that *Abraham* was the first Person, who brought Circumcision into Use. And *Abraham's* Name, and his great Familiarity with God, is not only mention'd by *Moses* in his Writings, but also by the *Magicians* themselves, who in the Formularies of *their own horrid Devotion*, have this Expression, *The God of Abraham*, signifying thereby the Intimacy, that there was between the great God himself, and this eminently-virtuous, and holy Man.

For 'tis on this Account they perform their Magical Operations in the Name of *The God of Abraham*, tho' they are far from knowing who this *Abraham* was. The same may be said of *Isaac*, *Jacob*, or *Israel*, which, tho' they are *Hebrew Names*, are frequently made use of by the *Egyptians* themselves, who pretend they can do prodigious, and ev'n miraculous Things by the Help of *Magick*.

But

But 'tis not my Business at present, to give any farther Account of Circumcision, which began at *Abraham*, and was abolish'd by our Blessed Saviour.

'Twill be more to my Purpose, to answer the severe Accusations, which *Celsus* brings against the *Jewish* Religion in general, who thinks he gains his Point, and effectually overthrows Christianity, if he can but make a successful Attempt against the *Jewish* System, on which the Doctrine of our Saviour is acknowledg'd to be most evidently built.

CHAP. XIX.

23

THEN he says, *That a Company of Men, that look'd after Sheep, and Goats, being left to the Conduct of Moses, were so grossly deceiv'd by him, that he made 'em believe, there was no other God but one.*

Let him show therefore, since he thinks they did, without just Cause, oppose the Worship of a Plurality of Gods, I say, let him show, whether,

on rational Grounds, he can establish the *Polytheism* both of the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*. Let him show the Substance and Essence of *Mnemosyne*, on whom *Jupiter* begat the *Muses*, or of *Themis*, on whom he begat the *Hours*, Let him show the Subsistence of the *Graces*, which are always represented *Naked*.

But I'm confident, he'll never be able to prove from the Things themselves, that the *Gods* of the *Greeks*, which have Bodies attributed to 'em, do deserve the Name of *Deitys*. For what Reason can be given, why we shou'd believe, that the Fables of the *Greeks* concerning their pretended *Deities*, have any more Truth or Sence contain'd in 'em, than those of the *Egyptians*, For Instance, whose Language is unacquainted with *Mnemosyne*, the Mother of the *Muses*, or *Themis*, the Mother of the *Hours*, or *Eurynome*, the Mother of the *Graces*, and the like?

What is there in all these empty Fictions, that deserves to be compar'd with the Evidence, and Weight, which that one Argument, drawn from the entire Harmony of the seemingly-clashing Parts of the spacious Universe, do's carry with it, to prove the perfect *Unity of God*.

For

For 'tis impossible in the Nature of the Thing, that a Piece of such *Divine Architecture*, all the Parts of which (how numerous soever, and how distant, and different soever from each other they may be) have so admirable an Agreement, and so manifest, direct, and constant a Subserviency to the Advantage and Ornament of the whole, shou'd be made by several Hands, as 'tis not rational to think, that the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies are caus'd by several Souls, since there's no Need of any more than one, which making the vast *Expansum* to move from *East* to *West*, contains within it self all those lower Things, which, tho' they are not in themselves compleat, do nevertheless conduce to the wonderful Harmony, and by Consequence the surprizing Perfection of the Universe. For every Thing which is circumscrib'd by the World is a Part belonging to it, but God is not properly a Part of any whole, of what Kind soever it may be. For *Absolute Perfection* is inseparable from the Nature of God, whereas all the Parts of the Universe, how agreeably soever they may strike upon our wondering Senses, and entertain ev'n our Nobler Powers, are naturally, evidently, and in a comparative Sense,

very

very grossly imperfect, and if we carry our Speculations a little farther, perhaps we shall find, that as God is not a part of the Universe: so neither in Propriety, and Strictness of Speech, can he be call'd a whole, since we must unavoidably suppose a whole to be compos'd of Parts; and at least, 'tis most highly irrational to think, that the great God has Parts, any one of which has not an equal Virtue, and Dignity with the rest.

24 CHAP. XX.

THEN Celsus says, *That these Men who look'd after Sheep, and Goats, were unhappily prevail'd with to believe there was no other God but one, whether they call'd him the Most High, or Adonai, or the Majesty of Heav'n, or Sabaoth, or whether they were pleas'd to give any other Name to the World, which was the Boundary of their real Knowledge.*

He adds, *'Tis no great Matter by what Name the great God be call'd; whether with the Greeks they call him Jupiter, or with the Indians, or Egyptians, call him by any other Name.*

To which I answer, that this Discourse of his do's naturally, and unavoidably lead me to a difficult and important Question concerning the true Nature of Names, whether, as *Aristotle* thinks, they depend legittirely on Institution, and Choice, or whether, according to the Opinion of the *Stoicks*, they have their Foundation originally laid in Nature, Words being first form'd on the Model of Things themselves, in Imitation of which, Names, and the Elements of *Etymology* were happily introduc'd into the World, or whether, as *Epicurus* thinks, who differs from the *Stoicks*, they have their Foundation partly laid in Nature, and are partly owing to Accident, and Contrivance, the first Men having undesignedly affix'd such and such articulate Sounds to such and such Objects, of which they had form'd, and would convey an Idea.

If therefore, I can make it appear, that some Names have a natural, and by consequence an inseparable Efficacy, (such as the Wise Men among the *Persians*, or the *Brachmans*, or *Sumanai* of the *Indians*, or the Wise Men of any other Nations do constantly make use of) and if I can prove, that the Art which is commonly call'd by the Name of *Magick* is not absolutely incongruous

to

to Reason, as the Followers of *Aristotle* and *Epicurus* think it is, but has certain stated Rules, as they that are skill'd in it do know, and can easily demonstrate, I say, if I can make this appear, I think, I may then safely affirm, that the Name *Sabaosh*, *Adonai*, and other Names, for which the *Jews* have so profound a Veneration, were not design'd to denominate any created Beings, much less those of an inferiour Order, but do contain some sacred Mystery, which has an immediate Reference to the great and adorable Creator of the Universe. These Names therefore, have an Efficacy, when they are duly pronounc'd by any Person whatsoever.

There are other Names, which, being pronounc'd in the *Egyptian* Language, are prevalent with certain Demons, whose Power is limited to such or such a Sphere, and others, which being pronounc'd in the *Persian* Language, are prevalent with other Demons.

And I might instance in several Nations of the World, that use other Names, applying 'em in very different Senses, and so we shall find that the terrestrial Demons, which have particular Places assign'd 'em, have Names giv'n 'em, according to the Language which

which the People speak. Any Man of Sense therefore, one wou'd think, that bestows but the least Thought on this important Subject, will scruple to make use of Names foreign to the Things which they represent, least he shou'd unawares, be guilty of the same Fault with them, who use such improper and harsh Expressions concerning God himself, that they don't at all stick to give him the false, and vile Appellation of inanimate Matter, or run into the Error of those unhappy Persons, who greatly derogate from the infinite Honour which is due to the supream and original Cause, and disparage true Virtue, and Piety, by mis-applying the Sacred Name of *Summum Bonum*, to a little glittering, but perishing Dust, or a happy Constitution of Body, or that which is falsely, but too commonly call'd an Honourable Descent, Noble, Princely, or Royal Blood. And surely the Danger of mis-applying the Name of the *Aweful Majesty of Heav'n*, or the *Chief Good*, is at least equal to that of changing the stated Names, which are us'd in *Magick* and have a Mystical Sense, and giving the Names of Superiour Powers to infernal Spirits, and on the contrary, those of infernal Spirits to Superiour Powers.

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I need not say, that at the very mention of *Jupiter*, is understood the Son of *Saturn*, and *Rhea*, the Husband of *Juno*, the Brother of *Neptune*, the Father of *Minerva*, and *Diana*, and the Person that committed Incest with his Daughter, nor need I say, that at the mention of *Apollo*, is understood the Son of *Jupiter*, and *Latona*, the Brother of *Diana*, and Brother to *Mercury* by the Fathers side, or need I speak of many other Things that were related by the Ancient Heroes (whom *Celsus* has, with so much Honour, enumerated) or contain'd in the old, and admir'd Theology of the learned *Greeks*.

Pray how comes it to pass, that *Jupiter* is call'd as he is, and that the Son of *Saturn* and *Rhea* is not the Name that's given him? The same Question may properly enough be ask'd, concerning the rest of the Ruffraff of the *Hearthen Gods*.

This Consideration, I think, has a manifest Tendency to favour, and justify the Practice of those Persons, who have some mystical but solid Reason for using the Name *Sabaoth*, or *Adonai*, and some other Names when they speak of *GOD*, since they who understand any Thing of the true Nature of Names, will easily find that

that some *sacred Mystery* is veil'd under the Names which are giv'n to the Angels; one of whom is call'd *Michael*, another *Gabriel*, and another *Raphael*, each having a Name affix'd to him by the Father of Spirits, agreeable to the Nature and Extent of that honourable Work, in which his great Creator has thought fit to employ him.

And the Virtue which accompanied the Pronunciation of our Saviour's Name, and by which cruel and obstinate *Demons* were frequently, and publicly dispossest'd both of the Minds and Bodies of Men, must, I think, be resolv'd, at least in some Measure, into the natural Efficacy of Names. I might add one Thing here, and that is this, that they who are skill'd in Enchantments, tell us, that if they make use of such and such Words in the Original Language, the End propos'd will certainly be obtain'd, but if the very same Words be chang'd, and others be made use of, which convey the very same Idea, they will immediately, and strangely lose their extraordinary Virtue.

So that the Power which they have, is not owing to the Things of which they are the external Signs, but to certain *unknown Properties*, that belong to the Names themselves.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS may serve as an Apology for the Christians, who willingly, and ev'n triumphantly embrace Death it self in the most horrid Shapes, rather than call God by the Name of *Jupiter*, whatever *Intention* or *Mental Reservation* they might have, or give him those Names which are us'd in the Languages, and adapted to the Religions of other Countries. For either they call him by the general Name of God, or they bestow such Epithets as these upon him, *The Creator of the World, the Former of Heav'n and Earth*, or might express themselves by the following Periphrasis, *He who has sent some wise and virtuous Men into the World, whose Names being honourably blended with his own have a strange and ev'n miraculous Power.*

Here I might enter into a long Discourse, in Opposition to them, who eagerly contend for the promiscuous Use of the most sacred Names.

For if *Plato* be so much, and not undeservedly commended, who brings in a Person upon *Philebus's* calling *Pleasure* a Goddess, making use of the following Expression, "For my part, *Protarchus*, I have a profound Veneration, ev'n for the Names of the Gods, which like themselves, I esteem, sacred and inviolable"; how much more ought *Christians* to be commended, who make Conscience of applying those Names to God, which are unhappily, but too commonly, borrow'd from the empty and ridiculous Fables of the Poets? But so much of this Matter for the present.

CHAP. XXII.

26

LET us now see how *Celsus* loads the *Jews* with Reproaches, which don't well suit with his horrid Presumption, in professing that he was perfectly acquainted with the Opinions of the *Christians*. They give themselves, says he, to the Worship of Angels, and to Magick, following therein

therein the Precepts of their celebrated Moses.

Let him therefore, since he's so well acquainted with the Jewish and Christian Doctrine, shew where there's any Precept in all the Pentateuch, that can be brought in Favour of Angel-Worship, and acquaint us how 'tis possible, that Magick shou'd be in Vogue with a Nation that observes the Law of Moses, who has left the following Words upon Record, *Regard not them that have familiar Spirits, neither seek after Wizards to be desil'd by 'em.*

Lev. xix
V. 31

CHAP. XXIII.

THEN Celsus undertakes to shew, That the Jews by reason of their monstrous Ignorance, tamely suffer'd themselves to be led aside into great, and very pernicious Errors.

I confess this might with Justice have been alledg'd against the Jews, with respect to their denying our Blessed Saviour to be the true Messiah, who had the plain Testimonials of a Divine Commission, and was so frequently,
and

and so evidently foretold by their own celebrated Prophets.

But not being desirous to entertain the least Thought concerning that Matter, which he knew wou'dn't serve his Cause, he supposes the *Jews* to be most grossly deceiv'd, in a Case wherein the contrary is extreamly evident.

CHAP. XXIV.

LEaving then what immediately relates to the *Jews* to another Opportunity, he enters into a Discourie concerning our Blessed Saviour, as being the Head of an *Upstart Sett*, who from him are call'd by the Name of *Christians*. He says, *That our Saviour appearing in the World, and introducing his Doctrine but a few Years ago, was (for what Reasons he knows not) tak'n by the Christians for the Son of God, in a strict and proper Sence.*

To which I answer, that when our Saviour did so lately introduce his Doctrine, it shou'd meet with such wonderful and happy Success, that almost in ev'ry Part of the whole habitable World a great Number both of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, of learned and unlearned Persons, shou'd so readily, and ev'n triumphantly forsake the Religion in which they were born, and bred, and to which they were pre-engag'd by many other strong, and almost indissoluble Ties, and on a sudden discover so extraordinary a Zeal for a new Religion, as to be willing to sacrifice their Reputation, their Fortunes, and ev'n their Lives for the Profession of it, (which can hardly be said of any other Doctrine, which has all external Advantages to recommend it.) I say, when the Posture of Affairs is such, we must be strangely blinded by the Force of Prejudice, if we don't observe a more than ordinary Appearance of the Providence of God, in so sudden, so remarkable, and so blessed a Change as this.

I think, I may safely say (not to speak from Prejudice, but as one who desires and endeavours to make impartial Enquiries into Truth) that a skillful Physician can't recover his Patients ev'n from their bodily Diseases without the Blessing

Blessing of Almighty God upon the proper Methods he prescribes.

And if any one can cure the more fatal Distempers of the Soul, can suddenly, and in a considerable measure, dispossess those rooted and dangerous Vices, that have for a long Tract of Time usurp'd and maintain'd a Dominion there, can free it from its former, and in some Sense, *Native Intemperance*, Injustice, Contempt, and Profanation of holy Things, and, as a Proof of his Skill, can instance in an hundred Persons, whose Manners he has been happily, and greatly instrumental to reform, I presume, you will not say, that this can be done without a seasonable, and more than common Interposition of the Providence of God.

If then any Person, who weighs these Things in the Ballance of his serious and deliberate Thoughts, will of Necessity acknowledge, that much of the Natural, and all the Moral Good, of which the whole World can boast, is owing to some higher Cause, than a *General Concourse* of the Supream and All-wise Being, how much more justly, and more eminently may this be said in Commendation of our Blessed Saviour, if we compare the Course of Life which his Followers once ignorantly and unhappily led, with the

Tenor of their future Conversation, and consider how willingly, and ev'n greedily they devoted themselves to Debauchery, Fraud, and Avarice, before they made a Profession of that holy Religion, which the Blessed Jesus introduc'd into the World, (which in the Judgment of the *Epicureans* was a Notorious Cheat, and the greatest Plague with which Mankind cou'd possibly have been infected) but in Proceſs of Time were illustrious Examples of the contrary Virtues, insomuch that some of 'em from a sincere and yehement Desire of attaining to an extraordinary Degree of Purity, and of Devoting themselves more entirely to the Service of God, did abstain from the lawful Delights of *Sense*, and those *rational Entertainments* which Marriage it self affords.

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And any one who examines into these Matters, with that Diligence and Exactness which is requisite, will easily perceive, that our Saviour, with a Greatness of Soul that was peculiar to him, attempted what was vastly beyond the Sphere of *meer humane Nature*, and that the Event did most remarkably answer his Design.

For when ey'ry Thing look'd with an unfavourable Aspect, on so great, and seemingly so bold an Undertaking,
and

and threaten'd, that the Gospel shou'd be confin'd to a very narrow Compass, when the *Roman* Emperors in their successive Reigns, the Governors of Provinces, and Generals of Armies, the Magistrates of particular Cities, the Soldiers, and the common People, in a Word, when all Persons that were in Places of Authority, or had any Interest, and Influence, declar'd open War against the *Christian Religion*, I say, ev'n then, under all those evident and great *external Disadvantages*, it bore the sacred and undeniable Marks of a Divine Original, approv'd it self to the Consciences of the most wicked Men, forc'd its Way, in Spite of the united Malice, and most vigorous Efforts both of Earth and Hell, gain'd ground by the most violent Opposition, and being superiour to all its Enemies, which were neither few, nor contemptible, and having a wonderful Power over the Minds of Men, all *Greece*, and a great Part of the most barbarous Nations, became Trophies of Honour to the Immortal Memory of its God-like Founder.

CHAP. XXV.

AND since the greatest Part of the World are entirely ignorant of the *Arts and Sciences*, and have but a small Measure, and scarce any *Glimmerings of Reason*, 'twas morally impossible, but that among such vast Numbers as embrac'd the Christian Religion, the *Irrational and Illiterate* shou'd greatly exceed those in Number, who had render'd themselves famous for their Sence and Learning.

But *Celsus*, not being willing to consider this as he ought, speaks with the highest Contempt of the *Sun of Righteousness himself*, who condescends to shine promiscuously on the greatest, and the meanest, and to enlighten, and warm with his refreshing Rays, the most eminent Saint, and the vilest Sinner, and he looks on this extraordinary Condescension, as an Argument of prodigious Folly, and unmanly Self-Debasement, as if it were not one of the highest Flights of Majestick Simplicity, that cou'd possibly be discover'd by an Incarnate God.

But

But *Celsus* himself can't say, with all his Prejudice, and Malice, that all who ever embrac'd the Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour, were dull and stupid to a Proverb, and the only Persons in the World who were so, since it seems he's so just, and so gracious as to acknowledge, that some few may be found among 'em, who are very severe in their Morals, and are capable of understanding *Allegories*.

CHAP. XXVI.

28

BUT because he personates a *Jew* (in Imitation of a Professor in the University, who makes his young Pupil declaim, that he may use himself to the Art of Rhetorick) I say, because he personates a *Jew*, entertaining our Saviour with Discourse that's very childish, and unbecoming the Gravity, as well as suppos'd Sense and Learning of an old Philosopher; Let me examine, according to my weak Ability, what 'tis that he supposes him to say, and make it appear, as I think I can easily do, that the *Jew* don't

don't strictly, or ev'n tolerably observe his Character.

Celsus introduces him, making his Address to our blessed Saviour, and pretending to convince him of several Points, and the first Thing of which he endeavours to convince him, is, that the Account of his being born of a Virgin is an empty and ridiculous Fable.

Then he reproaches him *with being born at an obscure Village, and having a Woman to his Mother, that got her Livelihood by going out to Service, who, he says, being convicted of Adultery, was divorc'd from her Husband, who was a Carpenter by Trade.*

Then he says, *That after this Indignity wand'ring from Place to Place, she was privately brought to Bed of our Saviour, and that he being forc'd by reason of Want, to work in Egypt, and having learn'd there some of those Arts, for which the Inhabitants of that Country are so Famous, return'd into his Native Country, and swelling with a vain Conceit of the Miracles he shou'd do, gave out that he was God.*

But for my Part, I must confess, to me, who do with a silent but deep Regret, pass by ev'n the weakest Arguments that are offer'd by our Adversaries, and naturally affect to trace Things.

Things, especially such as are of the last Consequence to the Souls of Men, 'till I come by slow Degrees, to their true Originals, I say, to me these Things are so far from giving an unhappy Shock, that they are no small Confirmation of that important Truth, that our Blessed Lord is the very Person, whom the Prophets foretold to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World. I can't deny, but that commonly a Man's Descent from rich and honourable Parents, and Enjoyment of the Advantage of a liberal Education, do's not a little conduce to blazon his Name, and command Reverence from Persons of an inferior Rank: But when one who labours, in the greatest Degree imaginable, under the contrary external Inconveniencies, can spread his Fame to the most distant Regions of the World, in Spite of his mean Extraction, and the fond Opinions which are too often receiv'd by aspiring Mortals, and climb the higher up the steep Ascent of Honour, by reason of the violent Opposition which is made against him, who, if he has any Spark of humane Nature left, can forbear to admire a Soul of the same Rank of Beings with himself, so strangely elevated beyond the common Pitch, and so nearly approaching to the Deity, so capable of forming

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forming well-laid, deep, and truly generous Designs, and of crowning all by a happy and answerable Execution?

If we make a serious and narrow Enquiry into the Matter, shall we not be ready and ev'n constrain'd to think thus with our selves, was it possible, that one who was born of poor and ignoble Parents, and was not instructed in the Liberal Arts, and Sciences, whereby he might have been render'd capable of insinuating himself into the People, and of engaging their Affections, and their Purles in his Service, shou'd so work upon the Passions of Men, by an invisible Power, and the naked Evidence of Truth, as almost universally to gain their Credit and Esteem, tho' the Doctrine which he introduc'd was in a great measure new, a Doctrine, which, without derogating in the least from any of the *Jewish* Prophets, did abolish the *Mosaic* Dispensation, and make void the Laws of the *Greeks*, especially those, which had an immediate Relation to Religious Worship, in which they were so grossly ignorant?

Is it not strange, and ev'n prodigious to a Miracle, that one who ev'n according to the Confession of his Enemies, was so meanly born, and bred, and by consequence was very unfit to manage

nage an Intrigue, which requires a Chain of Thought, and continu'd Thread of Artifice, shou'd so move the secret Springs of humane Souls, and so powerfully incline 'em against their strongest Inclinations, by encouraging the righteous with a pleasing Prospect of a glorious and eternal Reward in the World of pure and perfect Spirits, and by representing to the wicked, as in a Glass, those dreadful Torments which they must expect to suffer, when they shall fall into the Hands of the living God, I say, is it not strange, and ev'n prodigious to a Miracle, that such a one, shou'd not only engage ignorant, and illiterate Persons to embrace his Doctrine, but also a great Number of the rational and learned World, who, under the sacred Veil of naked Truths cou'd discern unfathomable Depths of supernatural Wisdom, display'd with all the Art that a God cou'd shew?

I remember *Plato* relates a Story of one that was born at *Seriphos*, who upbraiding *Themistocles*, a Famous General, said, that the Reputation he had happily establish'd was not owing to his Merit, but his happ'ning to be born at a famous City of *Greece*, whereupon *Themistocles*, who was sensible, and gratefully acknowledg'd, that the Place

of

of his Nativity had no small Tendency to render his Name immortal, return'd him this judicious and diverting Answer; "If I had been born (said he) at *Seriphos*, I shou'dn't have been so famous as I am; but if you had been born at *Athens*, you wou'd never have become *Themistocles*." Now our Saviour, who is upbraided with being born in a Village, and that not of *Greece*, or any celebrated Country, and having a poor Woman to his Mother, that got her Livelyhood by her Labour, and leaving his Country, by reason of Want, was forc'd to work in *Egypt*; I say, our Saviour, who, if I may accommodate the foregoing Instance to our present Case, was of a meaner Extraction than the fore-mention'd Person, that was born at *Seriphos*; did as it were, give a happy Shock to the whole habitable World, and made a greater Impression upon the savage Dispositions of Men, I scorn to say, than *Themistocles* the *Athenian*; but a greater than ev'n *Pythagoras*, or *Plato*, or any of the Wise-men, Princes, or Emperors were ever known, or reported to have made. What Person then, unless he loves to dwell upon the Superficies of Things, will not stand astonish'd, when he considers that our Blessed Saviour surmounted all the Difficulties, which lay

in the Way to his growing Reputation, and seem'd to threaten that his Name shou'd, as it were, sleep in Everlasting Silence?

CHAP. XXVII.

IT seldom happens that any one Person is famous for many Things at once, for One is famous for Wisdom, another for Military Discipline, and some of the *Barbarians* for their Skill in Magick, and several others for some few suppos'd Perfections, which perhaps do scarce deserve our Notice.

But our Saviour was very remarkable for the best Sort of Wisdom, for Authority, and for working Miracles, not to mention those other innumerable Excellencies that adorn'd his Person, and might sufficiently recommend him to the World.

He didn't act like a Tyrant, who, by the Help of a prevailing Party, takes Occasion to violate the known Laws of the Land in which he lives, nor like a Robber, who comes with Armed Men, against them who innocently pass

by the King's High-Way about their necessary Affairs, or like a Wealthy Man, who, by the Help of Bribes, induces Persons to come over to his Interest, whether by right or wrong, or like many others that might easily be mention'd, whose Proceedings do manifestly deserve our Censure, but like one, who came to teach an ignorant and degenerate World, what Thoughts they shou'd entertain of God, and how they might so regulate their Morals, as to maintain an humble and familiar Correspondence with his Blessed Majesty.

And as for *Themistocles*, and several other Persons, who gain'd a more than common Reputation, and did real and extraordinary Service to their Native Country, this must be said, to draw a Shade over their greatest Glory, that ev'ry Thing seem'd to smile on their just and honourable Attempts, and as it were, pave the Way for their glorious Victories, and immortal Triumphs. But as for our Blessed Saviour, besides what I have already said (which upon the first View, one wou'd think, was enough to have eternally conceal'd, or shamefully sully'd the Name of the greatest Heroe that the World cou'd ever boast of) the ignominious Death, which he suffer'd on
the

the Croſs; if he had had the faireſt Character, wou'd have giv'n his Followers juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect him of being a vile Impoſtor, if we may give any Credit to our Adverſaries, or at leaſt have drawn a moſt diſmal Veil over the few bright, and entertaining Scenes of the moſt *Aweſul* Tragedy, that was ever acted.

C H A P. XXVIII.

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AN D 'tis Matter of Wonder, that our Saviour's Diſciples, who, in the Judgment of our Enemies, were not Eye-Witneſſes of the Truth of his triumphant Reſurrection, and ſaw nothing but what was common and ev'n contemptible in his Perſon, ſhou'dn't be afraid to imitate him in his Sufferings, to encounter the moſt imminent and threat'ning Dangers, and leave their Native Country, to publiſh the Doctrine which their crucify'd, but bleſſed Lord had taught 'em.

For I believe that no Perſon, who, laying aſide his Prejudice, examines theſe Matters duely, will ſay, that they

wou'd ever have undergone the Fatigue of Itinerant Preaching, if they had not been fully perswaded of the vast Obligations that lay upon 'em, both from Reason, and Gratitude, not only to conform their Manners to the holy Precepts of the Christian Religion, but also to do what lay in their Power, to bring many others under the same honourable, and happy Bonds, when, as Matters went at that Critical Juncture, they were sure to incur the Displeasure of the Heathen World, who were zealous for their ancient Laws and Customs, and cou'dn't endure the least seeming Innovation, especially with respect to the pompous Ceremonies of their religious Worship. But all these Difficulties were light, and trivial, in the Esteem of those, who had Courage, not only to prove to the *Jewish* Nation, that our Blessed Saviour was frequently, and expressly foretold by their own Prophetick Oracles, but also to make it appear to others, as Occasion offer'd, that this very Person was the true *Messiah*, who was crucify'd but t'other Day, and willingly, and ev'n chearfully laid down his precious Life for the whole Race of Men, after the same manner, tho' with unspeakable Advantage, in which some others have sacrific'd all that's near and

and dear to 'em, for the good of their Native Country, to free it from a raging Pestilence, a threat'ning Famine, or some violent impending Tempest, that greatly endangers Ships, and puts a Stop ev'n to Navigation, which is so convenient, and necessary, for promoting an advantageous Trade into Foreign, and very distant Parts.

For there are some secret Reasons in Nature, which very few understand, why the Death of one virtuous Man, who readily suffers the greatest Evils that can possibly befall him, for the real and perhaps lasting Welfare of the Place of his Nativity, shou'd destroy, or at least severely check, the usurp'd Power of those infernal Demons, who are the Cause of Plagues, Famines, Storms, and the like evident and great Disorders, which frequently happen in the World. And I wou'd fain know of them, who don't believe, that our Saviour dy'd for the general Benefit of the humane Race, whether they won't give easie Credit to many Histories that are extant, both of the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, which furnish us with frequent, and remarkable Instances of Persons, who have freely laid down their Lives for the publick Good, and whose Death has been happily instrumental to purge away those

threat'ning, and grievous Calamities, that infected Cities, and perhaps whole Nations, or whether, on the Supposition that these are Matters of Fact, it be in the least improbable, that one, cloath'd with humane Nature, shou'd be nail'd to a Cross, to destroy the Works of the Devil, who before did often, and too successfully, exercise a Tyrannical Power over the Bodies, and Souls of Men.

Our Saviour's Disciples observing these Things, and many Others of the like Nature, with which in all Probability, their prudent, and indulgent Master thought fit to acquaint 'em, and being fill'd with the Spirit of God (for they were not inspir'd with their unusual Courage, by the Virgin which the Poets speak of, but by the true Wisdom of God) they made haste

Hom. 11.
Lib. 3. v. 2

Thro' the wide World their Fame to spread.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

32

BUT 'tis Time to return to the Jew, whom Celsus personates, who says, *That the Virgin Mary being big with Child, was divorc'd by her Husband the Carpenter, for committing Adultery with one Panthera, a Soldier, and being got with Child by that scandalous Wretch.* Let us see therefore, whether the Inventors of this Story don't give a false, and obscure Account of the Matter, and whether by all that they have to say, they are able to overthrow the Doctrine of our Saviour's miraculous Conception by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost? For so surprizing a Passage as this is, might very easily be falsify'd, and 'twas possible, they might deny the Truth of it, tho' they were inwardly convinc'd, that our Saviour was not conceiv'd in the common Way of humane Generation. And methinks, it wou'dn't have been incongruous at all, that they who didn't believe, or rather wou'dn't acknowledge the Miracle, shou'd invent a Fiction, to serve their malicious and base Design.

But to invent one, that was so far from having a plausible Appearance, that 'twas a great, and notorious Untruth, was to discover their Weakness to them, who are able to distinguish Truth from Falsehood.

For do's it stand to Reason, that one, who was so useful to the World in general, and express'd a most tender Concern, both for the *Greeks*, and *Barbarians*, that they might reform their Manners, from a Sense of a Future, and Aweful Judgment, and do what lay in their Power, to gain the Favour of the Blessed God, the Creator, and Supream Disposer of the Universe, I say, do's it stand to Reason, that such a one, so serviceable to promote the Glory of God, and the Welfare of precious and immortal Souls, shou'd be so far from being born in a miraculous Way, as to be of a base, and illegitimate Extraction?

I ask the *Greeks*, and particularly *Celsus*, (who, whether he be a *Platonist* or no, thinks he has sufficient Authority for what he says, if he do's but quote a Passage out of the learned *Plato*,) whether it be not a Reflection upon one, who holds the Doctrine of the *Transmigration of Souls*, and by Consequence, that every Body has a proper Soul to act, and animate it, to deny

ny that our Saviour was born in a lawful Manner, who engag'd in so difficult and important a Work, instructed so many ignorant and seduc'd Persons, and happily, and suddenly recover'd 'em from that Deluge of Immorality, in which they had been so long, and so deeply plung'd. Is it not more rational to think, according to the Opinion of *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and *Empedocles*, (on the Testimony of which learned Authors, *Celsus* himself do's very much rely) that there are some secret Reasons, why every Soul shou'd have a Body appropriated to it self, that is a fit Receptacle for it, and suited to the good, or bad Qualities, which it had in its State of Pre-existence? Is it not just, and reasonable, that a more than humane Soul, that do's more Service to the World, than many Thousands of others (to say no more, lest my Discourse shou'd be thought to favour of Prejudice) shou'd be united to a Portion of Organiz'd Matter, that is more excellent than the Generality of Bodies are?

For if those Souls, which by the Virtue of some secret Causes, are of too noble a Nature, to be united to an inanimate Creature, and are not worthy to animate a Body, that is compleatly form'd, have one that is adapted

+ adapted to 'em, the Head of which
 being disproportionable to the rest of
 its Members, do's in a great Measure
 hinder the free Exercise of Reason,
 and others, that are more perfect, act
 a Body that is more duly dispos'd,
 and so others, according to the several
 Degrees of their native, or acquir'd
 Excellencies, are sent into more or less
 perfect Bodies, why may not a par-
 ticular Soul assume a Body in a mi-
 raculous Way, a Body, that has some-
 thing in common with the rest of
 Men, that may render it fit for hu-
 mane Conversation, and something
 wherein it differs from 'em, that may
 in some Measure, secure it from the sad
 Contagion of a neighbouring, and di-
 stemper'd Mind. In short, if we give any
 + Credit to them, who are skill'd in *Physiog-
 nomy*, such as *Zopyrus*, *Loxus*, *Polemon*,
 and others, who have directly handl'd
 that difficult Subject, and pretend to
 find out extraordinary Mysteries, by
 observing the Rules which that Sci-
 ence proposes, what Absurdity is there
 in asserting, that all Bodies are suited
 to the Qualities of the Soul that acts
 'em?

Is there then the least Probability, that a Soul, so excellent in it self, and form'd for such great, and truly-generous Designs, as the Humane Soul of our Blessed Saviour, shou'd animate a Body, which, as *Celsus* represents the Matter, was begotten in Adultery, by a wicked Souldier, on the Body of a lustful Female? One wou'd rather think, that a Mad-man, or a Person, who prov'd a constant Plague to the Age, and Place he liv'd in, or a Teacher of Intemperance, and Injustice, and an impudent Encourager of all Manner of Vice, shou'd owe his Birth to so impure a Copulation, and not a Teacher, much less an eminent Practicer, of Temperance, Justice, and all other Virtues.

34

C H A P. XXX.

THIS was plainly foretold by the Prophet, and exactly agrees with the promis'd Sign, that we read of in the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, where 'tis said, *That our Blessed Saviour wou'd, by the Course of his Actions, make good his Name, and prove himself to be Emmanuel, God with us.*

And I think it may not be improper, to mention the Prediction of the fore-mention'd Prophet, that our Saviour shou'd be born of a Virgin, which *Celsus* takes no Notice of, tho' he pretends to be perfectly acquainted with what the *Christians* hold, either not having read it, or cunningly concealing his Knowledge, lest he shou'd unawares overthrow his own belov'd Opinions, and advance any Thing to the Prejudice of the Cause, which he espouses, and uses his utmost Endeavours to maintain.

The Words of the Prophecy are these,
Isaiah vii. Moreover the Lord spake again to Ahaz;
V. 10. saying, ask thee a Sign of the Lord thy
God,

God, ask it either in the Depth, or in the Height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord, and he said, hear ye now, O House of David, is it a small thing to weary Men? But will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a Sign, Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and call his Name Emmanuel.

That Celsus discover'd his Malice, in not mentioning the fore-going Prophecy, I gather, from his passing over it in a profound Silence, when he quotes some Passages in St. Mathew's Gospel, and particularly makes mention of the Star, that appear'd at the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour.

But if the Jew, whom Celsus personates, being us'd to make critical Remarks on Words, shou'd tell us that the Word, which is translated *Virgin*, shou'd be render'd *Young Woman*, I answer, the Hebrew Word עַלְמָה, which the Septuagint translate *Virgin*, tho' Others favour his Meaning of the Word, is understood of a Virgin in the Book of Deuteronomy. If a Damsel (that Deu. xxii
V. 23. is a Virgin) be betroth'd to an Husband, and a Man find her in the City, and lye with her, then ye shall bring 'em both out to the Gate of the City, and ye shall stone 'em with Stones that they dye; the Damsel because she cry'd not, being in the City, and

and the Man, because he has humbl'd his Neighbour's Wife. So thou shalt put away evil from among you. But if a Man find a betroth'd Damsel in the Field, and the Man force her, and lye with her, then the Man only that lay with her shall dye. But to the Damsel thou shalt do nothing, there is in the Damsel no Sin worthy of Death.

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But not to dwell too long upon the Hebrew Word, which perhaps few Persons understand, I shall endeavour to prove from the Context, that, according to the Prophetick Oracle, *Emmanuel* was to be born of a Virgin.

The Lord said to Ahaz, ask thee a Sign of the Lord thy God. either in the Depth, or in the Height above, Then 'tis said, that this Sign was to be giv'n, Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son. But what Sign cou'd a young Woman's Conceiving be, if it was not meant of a Virgin? And to which of the two, is it most proper to attribute the Conception of Emmanuel, that is, God with us, to a young Woman with Child, in an unlawful, and dishonourable Way, or to one, who had not lost her Virginity? Certainly, 'tis most agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, to suppose, that so extraordinary a Person was conceiv'd by the latter, in a strange, and ev'n miraculous Way.

And

And if the Jew lays such a mighty Stress upon those Words, *Ask thee a Sign of the Lord thy God*; I shou'd be glad to know, what Person was born, in the Reign of *Abaz*, of whom it might be said, *This is Emmanuel*; which being interpreted, is, *God with us*. And if no such Person can be found, I think, we may fairly understand this Text of our Blessed Saviour, who, as the Scriptures acquaint us, was to be born of the Seed of *David*, according to the Flesh, and the following Words, *In the Height above, or in the Depths below*, have a manifest Agreement with what is said of our Saviour, *He that descended, is the same that ascended up far above all Heav'ns, that he might fill all Things.* Eph. iv. V. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

36

THIS I say to a *Jew*, who, if he observes his Character, must give his ready, and firm Assent to the Truth of the *Jewish* Prophecies. And I ask *Celsus*, and those of his Party, did the Prophets foresee Things to come, or did they not? If they did not foresee 'em, what shou'd make 'em speak with such an Air of Assurance, and how comes it to pass, that the whole *Jewish* Nation has all along look'd upon their Prophecies, as divinely-inspir'd Oracles? And, since I am naturally led, into a Discourse concerning the *Jewish* Prophets, I hope, that what I shall offer on this important Head, may not only, by the Blessing of Almighty God, be of some Use to the *Jews*, who believe that they were divinely-inspir'd, but also to as many of the *Greeks* themselves, as act upon ingenuous Principles. For they must acknowledge, that the *Jews* had true Prophets among 'em, unless we cou'd suppose 'em, to have a sufficient Warrant, for violating

lating their *divinely-instituted* Rites, and paying Divine Worship, as a just Tribute to the Mock-Deities of Foreign Nations.

I prove my Assertion thus, We read in the *Jewish Law*, That other Nations ^{Deu-xviii.} hearken'd to Observers of Times, and to ^{V. 10,} Diviners. But to the *Jewish Nation* 'tis said, *As for thee, the Lord thy God has not suffer'd thee so to do.* Then it follows, *The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy Brethren.* If therefore, while other Nations had Men among 'em, who foretold future Events, whether by the flying or singing of Birds, or by a narrow Inspection into the Entrails of Beasts, or by the hollow Voices, that were form'd in the Bellies of certain Persons, or by the *Childean Horoscopes*, the *Jews*, (who had, in common with others, a Curiosity to know what shou'd come to pass) were forbid to take the fore-mention'd Methods, and had no Prophets of their own, who were acquainted with Futurities, they wou'd immediately have entertain'd mean Thoughts of their own Religion, as bearing no undeniable Characters of its Divine Authority, and have rejected all their Prophets down from *Moses* himself, insomuch that we have Reason to believe, they wou'd never have committed any Thing that

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was deliver'd by 'em to Writing, but either have had Recourse to the Heathen Oracles, or have practic'd something in Imitation of 'em, in their Native Country.

And it was not in the least absurd, that the Prophets, for the Satisfaction of some Persons, who desir'd it, shou'd prophesy concerning Matters, that seem'd to be of mean Importance, as
 1 Sam. ix. *Samuel* did, concerning some Asses that
 V. 20. were lost, and *Abijah*, concerning the
 1 Kin. xiv Death of *Jeroboam's* Son.
 V. 12.

And indeed, if they had no Prophets among 'em, how cou'd any, that were zealous for the *Jewish* Law, reprove them, who consulted the Heathen Oracles? As we read, that *Elijah* reprov'd *Ahaziah*, saying, *is it because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron?* I think then, that I have sufficiently prov'd, not only, that our Saviour was to be born of a Virgin, but also that there were divinely-inspir'd Prophets, to whom the *Jewish* Nation might have frequent, and satisfactory Recourse.

These didn't only, in the general, foretel some Things, that wou'd come to pass, with reference to our Blessed Saviour, and the remarkable Revolutions of Empires, and Change of the Face of Affairs in the *Jewish* Nation,

tion, and Conversion of the *Gentiles*; but, sometimes, did more particularly foretel some Things, as that the *Asses*, which *Kisb* had lost thou'd be found; and that *Jeroboam's* Son thou'd dye: And I might give many Parallel Instances, that we meet with in the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. XXXII.

I Have this to say farther to the *Greeks*, who wo'n't believe, that our Saviour was born of a Virgin, that the Creator of the World, if he pleases, can make ev'ry Animal bring forth its young, in the same wonderful manner, that is observ'd of some inanimate Creatures, and nothing hinders, but he may cause, if he pleases, the like unusual Productions in the World of Men.

For among Animals, there are some Females, that bring forth their young, without any previous Copulation with the Males, as, for Instance, the *Vultures*, which propagate their Kind in this uncommon Way, as the best Wri-

ters of Natural History do acquaint us. What Absurdity is there then, in supposing, that the All-wise God, designing to bless Mankind, with an extraordinary, and truly-divine Teacher, shou'd so order Matters, that our Blessed Saviour shou'd not be born, in the ordinary Method of humane Generation?

And the *Greeks* themselves do readily acknowledge, that some Men have come into the World, without the Conjunction of Man and Woman. For if the World had a Beginning, as many of 'em grant it had, then the first Man was not produc'd in the common Way, but, according to them, by the *Spermatick Vertue* of the Earth, which, to me seems much more strange, and unaccountable, than our Saviour's Nativity, if we do but follow the Dictates of impartial Reason, since the Way, in which he was born, has some Resemblance with the usual Method of carnal Copulation.

And, since I'm concern'd with the Learned *Greeks*, it may not be improper, to make my Appeal, ev'n to their own Histories, that it may appear to the World, that Others, as well as the *Christians*, must, upon their own Principles, acknowledge the Possibility of so extraordinary a Production, against
wh.ch

which they so loudly exclaim. Now some of their Modern Authors tell us, that *Plato* was born of *Amphictione*, without the Conjunction of *Ariston*, who was forbid to touch his Wife, 'till she shou'd be deliver'd of a Son, whom she shou'd conceive by *Apollo*.

This is a meer Fable, I confess, invented in Favour of a Person, whose uncommon Attainments made 'em inclin'd to think, that ev'n his Body was of a Divine Original, since they thought, 'twas fit, that the Bodies of those Persons, who are not on a Level with the rest of Men, shou'd have some honourable Mark, by which they may be distinguish'd from Vulgar Mortals.

And because *Celsus's* Jew continues his Discourse with our Blessed Saviour, and ridicules the Fiction, as he is pleas'd to call it, of his being born of a Virgin, and ranks it among the Fables of the *Greeks*, concerning *Danae*, *Menalippe*, *Auge*, and *Antiope*, I answer, that such pityful Drollery as this, wou'd look with an agreeable Air, in a *Merry Andrew*, who gathers a Mob about him, and plays his Monkey-Tricks on a Stage, but don't at all become one, who wou'd treat of Matters of great Importance, with that Gravity, and Seriousness, which the Nature of the Things may justly challenge from us.

C H A P. XXXIII.

THEN *Celsus*, making mention of some Things, relating to our Saviour's Going into *Egypt*, refuses to give Credit to those Parts of the History, which contain any Thing, that is supernatural, as the Angel's warning *Joseph*, the reputed Father of our Lord, and don't examine whether his Leaving *Judea*, and Going into *Egypt*, will not admit of an Allegorical Sence; but invents an Occasion for his literal Going thither, and believing, and acknowledging, in some measure, the Truth of our Saviour's Miracles, (which caus'd Abundance of People, to flock to him, esteeming him to be the true Messiah) but endeavouring to shew, that they were wrought by the Help of *Magick*, and were far from being Proofs of a Divine Commission, he says, That having been privately educated, he was forc'd to work in *Egypt*, and having learn'd those Arts, for which that Nation is so famous, he return'd into his own Country, and gave out that

he was God. But for my Part, I can't conceive, that a Magician wou'd so industriously promote a Religion, which teaches us, to have a strict Eye to the Day of Judgment, especially when we take any serious Affair in Hand; nor, can we think, that he wou'd take such Care, to inculcate that awful Solemnity, upon the Minds of his Apostles, whom he design'd to imploy, in the Promulgation of the Gospel, were he a Person of so infamous a Character. For either they wrought Miracles, or they did not. 'Tis absurd to suppose, they did no Miracles at all, but barely relying on the Authority of a Doctrine, which did not, like the Logick of the Schools, recommend it self to carnal Reason, had the Courage to promote a new discountenanc'd Religion. And if they wrought Miracles, do's it stand to Reason, that a Company of Magicians shou'd agree, to expose themselves to imminent Danger, and the greatest Inconveniencies imaginable, to promote a Doctrine, that condemns the Use of the very Art they practic'd? But 'twou'd be Loss of Time, to confute this Discourse of *Celsus*, which has nothing, but perhaps a little witty Drollery, to recommend it to the Palate of the unwary, and less judicious Reader.

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CHAP. XXXIV.

HE goes on in the same Comical and Bantering Strain; *If the Mother of Jesus, says he, was a Celebrated Beauty, and for that Reason, the Great God was pleas'd to admit her to his passionate Embraces, one wou'd think, that so excellent a Being is of too pure a Nature, to be captivated by the Charms of a frail, and humane Body, however he cou'dn't have made Choice of a more improper Person; viz. One, who had neither a Great Fortune, nor Noble Birth, to recommend her; but led so obscure a Life, that she was scarce known by those, who were her nearest Neighbours.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

HE continues his Raillery, and says, *That when her Husband, the Carpenter, came to hate her, and sue for a Divorce, all that she had to plead in her own Behalf, was ineffectual, to redress her Grievances, nor did the Great God see fit (as much as you wou'd make us believe, he lov'd her) to engage his Power, to protect her from threat'ning Danger, ev'n in her Native Country. Therefore none of these Things, says he, have the least Reference to the Kingdom of the Blessed God. But this Language, is just like that, of a Company of Persons, scolding in the open Streets, who vent their Passion, without the least Regard to the Rules of Justice, or Civility.*

CHAP.

 CHAP. XXXVI.

40

✓ **T**HEN taking some Things out of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, or perhaps out of some of the other Evangelists, concerning the Dove, that descended upon our Saviour, at his Baptism, he wou'd fain have the whole Account, to pass for a false, and trifling Story. And having said enough, as he imagines, to prove, that our Saviour wasn't born of a Virgin, he continues his Discourse, but don't treat of Things, in the Order of Time, in which they came to pass, (for inveterate Malice can never endure, to be confin'd to a regular Method) and talks, like those shatter-brain'd Fellows, whose Heat, and undue Passion, do's so transport 'em, beyond the Bounds of Reason, that they don't stick, to say whatever comes into their Minds, and so are hinder'd, from managing, in a becoming Way, the several Heads of severe, but unjust Accusation, which they bring against their Adversary, with an Air of Vanity, and Insolence. For had'n't he been greatly wanting,

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in the pretended Method he observes, he wou'd have trac'd the History from its very Original, since his Intention was, to expose it to Contempt. But on the contrary, the Mighty *Celsus*, who boasts so much of his comprehensive Knowledge, after he had finish'd his Discourse, concerning our Saviour's Birth, immediately passes on, to the Descent of the Holy Spirit, at his Baptism, in the Resemblance of a Dove. Then he finds Fault with the Prophecies concerning his Incarnation. After that, he returns to what immediately follow'd his Nativity, *viz.* To give an Account of the Star, that appear'd, and the Wise Men, that came from the *East*, to worship him. But any diligent Reader, may save me the Labour, of showing, how confus'd *Celsus* is, throughout the whole of his Book, and this one Thing is sufficient, to convince any Person, who loves Exactness of Method, that 'twas a Piece of Arrogance in him, to give his Book the Title of *A True Relation*, and was a Strain of Vanity, perhaps beyond most Philosophers, that ever went before him.

Plato says, " That it don't become
" the Character of a Man, famous for
" Wisdom, to be positive in Matters,
" which are involv'd in very great
" Obscurity.

"Obscurity." And *Chrysippus*, after he has giv'n the Reasons, that induc'd him to be of this, or that Opinion, do's modestly refer us to those Persons, who are able to give a more clear, and exact Account. But this mighty Man, being much wiser, I suppose, than *Plato*, *Chrysippus*, and all the *Greek* Philosophers, gives his Book the engaging Title of *A True Relation*, which suits well enough, I confess, with his Boasting, that he didn't want to be inform'd of the Opinions, which the *Christians* held.

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But that it mayn't be thought, that I pass by what he says, for Want of being in a Capacity, to return him a proper, and sufficient Answer: I have resolv'd to examine every Material Article, tho' I cannot observe so strict a Method, as I wou'd, but am forc'd so far to comply, ev'n with the Folly of my Adversary, as to trace him thro' the Labyrinth of his confus'd Discourse.

Let us see then, what he has to offer, against the Descent of the Holy Spirit, on our Blessed Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove.

CHAP. XXXVII.

THE Jew, whom Celsus personates, directs his Discourse to our Saviour, in the following Words; *You pretend, says he, that a Bird appear'd to you, at your Baptism; but can you produce any credible Person, that was present, to see it; Or, heard the Voice from Heav'n, (by which, you say, you were declar'd, to be the Son of God) besides your self; and (if we may take your Word) another Person of the same pityful Class?*

But before I return him a direct and full Answer, I must beg Leave, to make one Remark, that 'tis very difficult, and in some Cases, impossible, to give evident, and undeniable Proofs, of the Certainty of undoubted Matters of Fact.

Suppose any One shou'd say, there never was such a Scene of Action, as the Trojan War, grounding his bold Affirmation, on the seeming Impossibility, of some of the material Circumstances, which attended it; and not conceiving, how there shou'd be, *In*

rerum

rerum natura, such a Person, as *Achilles* is represented to us, the Son of *Peleus*, and *Thetis*, the Goddess of the Sea; or *Sarpedon*, the Son of *Jupiter*, or *Ascalaphus*, and *Jalmenus*, the Sons of *Mars*; or *Aeneas*, the Son of *Venus*; how cou'd we convince him of his gross Mistake, when so many Fables, being interwoven with the Body of the History, are so readily, and so universally believ'd? Or suppose, any Person shou'd call into Question, the Story of *Oedipus*, and *Jocasta*, and *Eteocles*, and *Polynices*, their Sons, by reason of what is confidently related, concerning the *Sphinx*, a certain Monster, that was half a Virgin, how cou'd we demonstrate, that the whole Account is true?

I might say the same, concerning the second *Theban* War, which was continu'd, by the Posterity of them, who had lost their Lives in the first (tho' that be more free from the Appearance of Fiction, than the former Story) and concerning the Return of the *Heraclida* to *Peloponnesus*; and I might instance in many other Things, of the like Nature, which are recorded in the Histories of the *Greeks*. But he who reads 'em, without a Tincture of Prejudice, and with a sincere Desire, that he may not be deceiv'd, will judge, how far he is requir'd,

requir'd, to yield his ready, and firm Assent; what Passages he must take in an Allegorical Sence, and what he must reject, as being writ in Favour of some particular Persons, and will endeavour, to find out the true, and full Meaning of those, who were the Original Authors of these Stories, which the *Greeks*, who are a learned Nation, do so generally believe. I wou'd lay down this Præliminary, with respect to the entire, and amazing History of our Saviour's Life, as 'tis impartially related in the Gospels, and I don't mention this, as if I wou'd have the more intelligent; and learned Sort of People, to take Things on trust, but to shew, that the Reader has great Need of Candor, joyn'd with a severe Application, and must penetrate, if I may so say, into the very Spirit of the Authors, if he wou'd take their Writings in their true Sence, and utmost Latitude. I answer then, in the first Place, that if the Person, who rejects the Account, that's giv'n, of the Spirit's appearing to our Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove, was a Follower of *Epicurus*, *Democritus*, or *Aristotle*, there wou'd be some plausible Ground for his Incredulity, because then, I confess, he wou'd observe his Character.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

BUT *Celsus*, with all his Wisdom, seems to me, to have quite forgot, that all this while he was speaking, in the Person of a *Jew*, whom we must suppose, to yield a firm Assent, to many Passages in the Prophets, that wou'd sooner be liable to shock our Reason, than any Thing related in the History, of which, I am now discoursing. For one might ask this pretended *Jew*, who wo'n't believe, that the Holy Spirit appear'd to our Blessed Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove; Pray Sir, how will you be ever capable, of giving evident, and undeniable Proof, that God spoke to *Adam*, *Eve*, *Cain*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*, as your Scriptures do plainly assert he did? And, to set History against History, I wou'd address this *Jew* after the following Manner; Dear Sir, you can't be ignorant, that *Ezekiel*, who is one of your own celebrated Prophets, has these very Words, *The Heavens were open'd, and I saw Visions of God*;

Ezek. i.
V. 1.

God; and he adds, *This was the Appearance, of the Likeness of the Glory of the Lord, and he said to me,* Ezek. i.
v. 28

Now if those Things, that are related of our Saviour, must be acknowledged to be false, because, as you think, they have not sufficient, extrinſick Evidence, to recommend 'em to the World; ſince you affirm, *They were ſeen, and heard, by no Perſon but himſelf, and another, of the ſame pityful Claſs;* Have we not more Reason to ſuſpect, that *Ezekiel* impos'd upon us, when he ſaid, that the Heav'ns were open'd to his View? And tho' the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſays, *I ſaw the Lord, ſitting upon a Throne, high, and lifted up, above it ſtood the Seraphims, each one had ſix Wings;* Iſa. vi.
v. 1. Pray Sir, what rational Assurance have you, that he really ſaw, this entertaining, and amazing Sight? You believe that theſe Things are true, and come from the Spirit of God, who neither can be deceiv'd, nor will deceive us, and are perſwaded, not only, that the Prophet ſaw 'em, but alſo that he was Divinely inspir'd, when he committed theſe Things to Writing.

But I ask, which of theſe three, is it moſt fit we ſhou'd believe, *Ezekiel, Iſaiah, or our Blessed Saviour?* The two former did nothing, that deſerves to be compar'd, or ev'n mention'd, with

what the latter has done, whose Power was not only most gloriously display'd, when he appear'd, and dwelt on Earth; but shines with a happy, and remarkable Lustre, at this Distance of Time, in the Conversion, and exemplary Reformation of those, who believe in God thro' him. And that all those wonderful Effects, which we frequently see, are owing to his infinite Power, I infer from hence, that as he said, and, as constant Experience may convince

Mat. ix. *us, the sincere Labourers are few*, in a
V. 37. comparative Sence, and yet *the Harvest*
ibid. V. 38 *of Souls is great*; that is, vast Numbers
are, every where, almost continually,
brought into God's Threshing-Floor,
if I may so say, I mean, the visible
Church.

44

This I say to a Jew, not as if I had the least Design, to derogate from the Honour, which I am sensible, is due to *Ezekiel*, and *Isaiah*, (for that wou'd be very inconsistent, with the Profession, which I make, of the Christian Religion, which is built on the Jewish Prophets, as well as on our Saviour's Apostles, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*) but I wou'd convince him, if it be possible, upon the Principles, in which we both agree, that we have far more Reason, to give Credit to the Report of our Blessed Saviour;

Eph. ii.
V. 20.

Saviour, who is reported to have seen, and heard such Things, and, for ought we know, did acquaint his Disciples, with the Vision which he saw, and the Voice which he heard from Heav'n.

Perhaps, it may be objected against us, That ev'n they, who have giv'n us an Account, of the Holy Spirit's Appearing in the Resemblance of a Dove, and of the Voice, that came from Heav'n; hadn't these Things, so much as from our Saviour's Mouth, since, ev'n according to our own Notions, the same Spirit, which inspir'd Moses, to write a History of what pass'd for many Ages, before ever he was born, ev'n from the Creation of the World to the Time of Abraham; who, in some Sence, was the Father of the Jewish Race, might also immediately reveal the strange Passages, which happen'd at our Saviour's Baptism, to the four Evangelists.

But to this I answer, that one, who is favour'd, with what the Scriptures call the Gift of Wisdom, can easily account for the Opening of Heav'n, and assign a Reason, why the Holy Spirit appear'd, to our Blessed Saviour in the Resemblance of a Dove, rather than in the Shape of any other Animal. However, these are Niceties, that are foreign to our present Purpose.

All therefore, that I shall do at present, shall be to shew, that *Celsus* did not only want the Innocence of the Dove, but ev'n the Subtilty of the Serpent, when he put such Discourse as this, into the Mouth of one, whom he calls a *Jew*, who, if he be not false to his Pretensions, must believe several Things, that are much more improbable, than any Thing related in the History, of which, I am now discoursing.

45

CHAP. XXXIX.

I Remember, in a Disputation, I had with some Celebrated *Jewish* Doctors, and before a great Deal of Learned Company, who were at once Witnesses, and Judges of what I said, I us'd this Argument against 'em; Pray Gentlemen, let me know, said I, since two Persons have appear'd, upon the Stage of the World, who are confidently reported, to have done such Things, as were vastly beyond the Sphere of Nature; viz. *Moses*, the Lawgiver of the *Jews*, who has writ the History of what he did; and

JESUS

JESUS, our Master, who has not left behind him, in Writing, an Account, of any of the Actions which he did; but has the concurring Testimony of the four Evangelists; I say, let me know, on what Grounds, you can justify the vast Difference, which you make between 'em, that we must believe, forsooth, that *Moses* deliver'd nothing, but what was true, tho' the *Egyptians* reproach him, as one that dealt with the Devil; but must look upon our Saviour, as a vile Impostour, on the Account of the severe Accusations, which you bring against him. We see, that both these Persons, have their Authority supported, by the Testimony of a great Body of People, *Moses* has his supported by the ready, and joint Testimony of the *Jewish* Nation, and our Saviour his by the General Suffrage of the *Christians*, who don't deny *Moses*, to be a Prophet sent from God; but confirm the History of our Saviour, ev'n by the Sacred, and Undisputed Authority of your celebrated *Moses*. If therefore, you desire us, to justify our Conduct, in paying so awful a Regard to our Blessed Saviour, do you first assign some Reasons, why you believe in *Moses*, who came into the World, many Ages before the *incarnate Jesus*, and then, it may be time to acquaint

quaint you, with the *rational* Grounds, on which our Faith is built.

But if you refuse to give us any Reasons, why you believe in *Moses*, neither shall we think fit to acquaint you, with those we have, for believing in our Saviour, or if you are not able to offer any Demonstrative Arguments in favour of your justly celebrated *Moses*, be pleas'd to hear, what Arguments we can bring, ey'n from the Law, and the Prophets, to prove, that our Jesus is the true *Messiah*. And which is something strange, those very Arguments, which we bring from the Old Testament Writings, to prove, that our Saviour had a Divine Commission, do, at the same Time, prove, that *Moses* and the Prophets were Persons, who were immediately inspir'd. But to return.

46 The Law, and the Prophets, abound, with as strange Stories, as that of the Dove, that appear'd to our Saviour, at his Baptism; and the Voice, that came to him out of Heav'n; and that it was the Spirit of God, that appear'd to him, in the Resemblance of a Dove, do's, I think, at least seem highly probable, from the Consideration of the Miracles, which our Saviour wrought, which *Celsus* says, he did, by the Help of Magick, which he had learn'd in *Egypt*.

Here I think, it may not be improper, to mention, not only the Miracles of our Saviour; but also those, which were wrought by the Apostles, who were, every Way, qualify'd, for that great Work, in which, their Master did engage 'em. For if their Ministry hadn't been accompany'd with Miracles, they wou'd never have been able, so happily to prevail with their Hearers, to renounce the Religion, in which they had been born, and bred, and to embrace a new, discountenanc'd Doctrine, the Profession of which, wou'd expose 'em to the greatest Dangers, ev'n to an ignominious, and painful Death, and some remarkable Footsteps of that Holy Spirit, who appear'd to our Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove, do remain among *Christians*, to this very Day. They dispossess *Demons*, perform many wonderful Cures, and sometimes, when God sees fit, they foresee, and foretel future, distant, and very contingent Events. And therefore, let *Celsus*, and his *Jew*, ridicule us, as much as ever they please, yet 'tis plain, and I think, undeniable, that many Persons have embrac'd the Christian Religion, in Spite of all the Force of Prejudice, the Spirit of God makings so sudden, and so powerful an Impression on their Minds, whether in

a Dream, or Vision, or some other Way, that instead of being implacable Enemies to Christianity, as once they were, they have chearfully, and ev'n triumphantly, laid down their Lives, for the Sake of their Profession, and seal'd the Truth with their warmest Blood,

If I shou'd only relate those Things, that have fall'n, within the Compass, of my own personal Knowledge, and frequent Observation; I shou'd furnish Infidels, with abundant Matter of Laughter, who wou'd be ready to suspect us *Christians*, as we do them, of inventing Fictions, to support a bad, and sinking Cause, tho' the Searcher of Hearts can bear me Witness, that my Design, and Endeavour, is not to maintain our Religion, by fabulous, and ridiculous Narrations; but by a Variety of proper Evidence, to recommend it to the World, as being deriv'd from no other, than a Divine Original.

And since 'tis a pretended Jew, who calls in Question, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, upon our Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove, one might well demand, who is it, that says thus
 Isa. xlviii in *Isaiah's* Prophecy, *Now the Lord God*
 Y. 16. *has sent me, and his Holy Spirit*; which Words are ambiguous, and may either signify, that the Father, and the Holy Spirit

Spirit, sent our Blessed Saviour, or, that the Son, and Spirit, were both sent by the Father, the latter of which two Interpretations, seems to me, I confess, to be true, and genuine, and because our Saviour was sent first, and then the Holy Spirit, that the Prophecy might be fulfil'd, the Accomplishment of which, was reserv'd for Future Ages, for that Reason among others, I judge it is, that Things are related, as they are, by the Evangelists.

CHAP. XL.

47

AND since Celsus's Jew do's, in some sort, acknowledge, that our Saviour was baptiz'd by John the Baptist, I wou'd produce the Testimony of a Famous Author, who liv'd quickly after, I mean Josephus, who in the 18th Book of his Jewish Antiquities, says, " That John the Baptist was invested with Authority to baptize, and promiss'd Remission of Sin to them; that came to his Baptism.

The

The same Author, tho' he don't believe, that our Saviour was the true Messiah, and when he enquires into the Cause of the Taking of Jerusalem, and the Destruction of the Temple, don't ascribe this grievous, and surprizing Calamity, as he ought to have done, to the Crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour; yet is forc'd: to make some slender Approach to Truth, and to acknowledge, that 'twas a remarkable Judgment, which God sent upon the Jewish Nation, for killing James the just, (who was Brother to Jesus, who is call'd by the Name of Christ;) and was, without doubt, a very virtuous, and pious Man.

This James was the same Person, St. Paul, that sincere Follower, and eminent Apostle of our Blessed Lord, tells us, that he went to visit, because he was the Brother of Christ, which Title was proper for him, not so much by Reason of their being, in a peculiar Sence, of the same Flesh, and Blood, as on the Account of the admirable, and manifest Agreement both of their Doctrine, and their Morals.

If then the fore-mention'd Author says, "That the Destruction of Jerusalem, was owing to the Barbarous Death of James the just;" how much more Reason is there to believe, 'twas really,

really, and principally owing to the Crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour, whose Divinity, is so frequently attested, by so many large, and united Bodies of Men, that consist of such Persons, as have left their vicious Practices, devote themselves to the Service of their great Creator, and liberal Benefactor, and in all their Actions, have a most serious Regard to his Honour, and Interest in the World.

And tho' the pretended Jew shou'd make no Apology for the Prophet *Ezekiel*, and *Isaiah*, since we meet with Passages in their Writings, and in the rest of the Prophets, which are no less strange, I am sure, than those which are related in the Gospels, concerning our Blessed Saviour; viz. That the Heavens were open'd, and that he heard a Voice from thence; I shall endeavour to shew, that all, who believe an over-ruling Providence, acknowledge, there have been prænatural Visions, and such wherein future Events, relating to the Affairs of humane Life, have been more clearly, or more obscurely represented to the warm Imagination; I say, I shall endeavour to shew, that the Assertors of Providence acknowledge, that such Visions have been seen, by Persons in their Sleep; and that 'tis no difficult

Mat.

Matter to conceive, upon this *Hypothesis*, that the same Impressions may be made on the Imagination, when a Person is awake: Whether they be design'd by God, for the private Benefit of some particular Persons, or to promote the spiritual Advantage of Mankind in general, and as in our Sleep, tho' there be nothing to strike upon our Sense of Sight, or Hearing, yet we strongly imagine, that we see such Objects, and hear such articulate Sounds, when 'tis our rational Faculty, that's all this while at Work, and undergoes these various, and strange Sensations: So there's no Absurdity, in supposing, that the same Thing might happen to the Prophets, when we read, that the Heav'ns were open'd to 'em, that they saw strange Sights, and heard the Voice of the great God himself.

For my Part, I don't suppose, that the visible Heavens were open'd, and, in a literal Sence, were cleav'd asunder, to give the Prophet *Ezekiel* an Occasion, for writing as he do's.

And I am fully satisfy'd, that they who read the Gospels, with any Measure of Judgment, won't understand our Saviour's Vision, in the gross Sense of the Words of Scripture, tho' I am not a little sensible, that the ignorant Sort of People, who, at every

Turn,

Turn, and to support an idle Whimsy of their own, will allow the Frame of Universal Nature, to be shak'd from off its Hinges; and imagine, that so vast, and compact a Body, as that of the Heavens, was rent in two; will be offended with any Discourse in Divinity, that do's in the least, interfere with the literal, and most obvious Sence of Scripture.

But one who dives to the Bottom of Things, will find, that, according to the Account, we have, in Holy Writ, there is a certain, Divine Knowledge, which none, but a few, happy Persons have, (as Solomon says, *Thou shalt find the Knowledge of the Lord*) and that the several Branches of it, are such as follow; viz. A Sight, adapted to the Contemplation of Objects, that are beyond the Sphere of *unassisted Nature*, such as Cherubims, and Seraphims; a Hearing, suited to the Perception of Sounds, vastly different from those, which are form'd in the Air; a Taste, that can relish the living Bread, that came down from Heaven; a Smell, that can distinguish that Heavenly Perfume, of which, the Apostle speaks, when he says, *We are unto God a sweet* *Savour of Christ*; and a Touch, of which, St. John speaks, when he says, *Our Hands have handl'd of the Word of Life*.

Prov. ii.
V. 5.

Cor. ii
V. 15.

John i
V. 16.

The

The Blessed Prophets therefore, being Partakers of these Divine Sensations, and seeing, hearing, tasting, and smelling, in a Way that is perfectly supernatural, we must understand these Things, in the same Sence, in which we must take that Place in *Ezekiel*, where he's said, to have eat the Book that was deliver'd him.

In this Sence it was that *Isaac* smelt the sweet Savour of the Divine Garments of his Son, and pronounc'd this Blessing upon him, *See the Smell of my Son is as the Smell of a Field; which the Lord has bless'd.* And after the same Manner, our Saviour touch'd the Leper, which I think, mult be understood of a Spiritual, rather than a Corporal Touch, that he might not only cleanse him, as some think, from his bodily Distemper, but chiefly, that he might purge him from the viler, and more dangerous Leprosy of Sin. And after the same manner, *John the Baptist* bears Witness in the following Words, *I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, like a Dove, and it abode upon him, and I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with Water, the same said to me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining, the same is he, who baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and I saw, and bare Record, that this is the Son of*

John i.
v. 32.

of God. And the Heav'ns were open'd to our blessed Saviour, when there was no Person present, as far as I can gather from the Account, which we have in Scripture, to be an Eye, and Ear. Witness of what happen'd to him, except John the Baptist.

But our Saviour foretold his Disciples, that they also shou'd see the Heav'ns open'd, saying, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you, that hereafter you shall see Heav'n open, and the Angels of God ascending, and descending upon the Son of Man.*

John i.
V. 51.

And, in the foregoing Sense, we must understand that Place of Scripture; where 'tis said, that St. Paul was carry'd up to the third, or highest Heaven, which before was open'd to him, since we are well-assur'd, he was one of the sincere Followers, and most eminent Apostles of our Blessed Lord. But as for those Words, *Whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I can't tell, God knows;* 'tis not my Business at present, to insist upon 'em.

2 Cor. xii
V. 3

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

GIVE me leave to add one Thing here, and that is this, that *Celsus*, without any Warrant from Scripture, or Reason, as far as I can see, imagines, that our Saviour did acquaint his Disciples, with the strange Things that had happen'd to him, that the Heavens had been open'd, and that the Spirit of God, had descended upon him at the River *Jordan*.

But this mighty Man, with all his Wisdom, seems not at all to have consider'd the Incongruity of such a Supposition, with the General Practice of our Saviour, who forbade his Disciples, to make mention of the Vision, which he saw upon the Mountain, 'till he shou'd rise from the Dead. And Nothing was more common, as appears from the Gospels, than for our Blessed Saviour, to do what lay in his Power to avoid all Talk, that was in favour of himself. Therefore he says, *If I bear Witness of my self, my Witness is not true.* And because he industriously avoided

John v.

V. 31.

avoided every Thing that savour'd of Self-Applaude, and had rather that his Works shou'd praise him, and demonstrate to the World, that he was the true *Messiah*, the Jews said to him, *If thou be the Christ, do thou tell us plainly.* And because the Jew, whom *Celsus* personates, speaking of the Appearance of the Holy Spirit, to our Saviour, in the Resemblance of a Dove, says, *There's no Body, to attest the Truth, of what happen'd to you, besides your self, and another Person, of the same pitiful Class;* I think it will be seasonable, and highly necessary, to shew, that he talks in such a manner, as is very unsuitable to the Character he bears. And this is evident, from the different Regard, which the Jews pay to *Christ*, and to *John* the Baptist, both with Respect to their Persons, and their Sufferings, which to me is a sufficient Argument, that, after all the Pretensions which he makes to Knowledge, he cou'dn't personate a Jew, discoursing consistently with our Blessed Saviour.

49

CHAP. XLII.

THEN *Celsus*, (I don't well know how, but I suppose, purposely) overlooks one of the most cogent Arguments, that can be brought, in Favour of our Blessed Lord; viz. His being foretold by the *Jewish* Prophets, by *Moses*, and those who succeeded him, and ev'n by some, who liv'd long before him. I presume, 'twas for this politick Reason, because he knew very well, that he cou'dn't return any tolerable Answer to a Proposition, to which both the *Jews*, and the greatest Hereticks did assent, who all agree, that many of the Prophecies of the *Jewish* Prophets were accomplish'd, in the Person of him, whom we believe to be the True Messiah.

And perhaps, he had never read the Prophecies, but had heard a general, and loose Report concerning 'em. For if he had known, that there have been several Prophets, who have foretold our Saviour's Appearance in the World, certainly he wou'd never have put
these

these Words, into the Mouth of a Jew, (which I think, wou'd much better have become a Samaritan, or a Sadducee,) viz. My Prophet said formerly in Jerusalem, that the Son of God wou'd come to reward the Righteous, and to punish the Wicked.

For surely, there have been more than one Prophet, that have prophesied of our Blessed Saviour, since ev'n the Sadduces, and the Samaritans, who own no more than the Pentateuch, can't but see; if they are not wilfully blind, that Moses himself has prophesied concerning him, and 'tis impossible, the Prophecy shou'd be publish'd at Jerusalem, since the Name of no such Place was known, for many Ages after Moses.

By the Way; I wish with all my Heart, that all our implacable Adversaries; unless it shou'd please God to convert 'em, were as ignorant as Celsus, not only of the true, and full Sense of the Things, of which the Scripture treats; but also of the very Letter of it, that so their Discourses, not having that Colour of Reason, which sometimes they have, the common People might not so much, as for a short Space of Time, yield, ev'n the weakest Assent to any thing, they are able to produce against us.

Besides no Jew, but one, who is brought over to the Religion which we embrace, will acknowledge, that the Prophets foretold, that the Son of God was to come into the World. What the Jews say is this, that the *Messiah* is to come, and in their Disputations with us, the first Question almost which they ask, is, *Who is this Son of God, of whom you talk so much?* intimating to us, that they don't believe, that any such Person was ever intended by the Prophets.

For my Part, I firmly believe, that the Person, of whom there are so many Predictions, in the Writings of the Jewish Prophets, is the Son of God; but I can't, for my Life, conceive, how a Jew, who denies this plain Assertion, can consistently with his Character, make use of the following Words, *My Prophet said formerly in Jerusalem, that the Son of God was to come into the World.* Then Celsus adds the following Words, *To reward the righteous, and to punish the wicked.* And, as if this was all that was fore-told, and there were no Predictions, concerning the Place of our Saviour's Nativity, or the unjust, and barbarous Treatment, which he met with, at the Hands of his own Country-men the Jews, or his Resurrection from the dead, or the Miracles he

he perform'd; he says, *Why shou'd this Prophecy be appropriated to you, when the same Thing may be said of many Persons, that liv'd before, and after you, with more reason, than you can say it of your self?* and seeming to insinuate, that there were abundance of Persons, to whom this Prophecy might fitly be apply'd, as well in all respects, as to our Blessed Saviour; he says, *Several Enthusiasts and Impostors have claim'd the venerable Title, of the Son of God, and have said, that they came down from Heav'n; tho' I know not, what Ground he cou'd have, for using this Expression, since the Jews do strongly deny, that our Saviour was the Son of God.* To this I answer, that several Prophets have prophecy'd in a different manner, concerning the *Messiah*, some by obscure, and almost unintelligible Hints, others by Allegories, and some in the plainest, and most express Terms imaginable. And because *Celsus* discovers his Malice, and excessive Heat, in the Sequel of his Discourse, where the *Jew*, speaking to those of his own Nation, that were converted to the *Christian Faith*, has the Confidence to say, *That the Prophecies which are apply'd to our Saviour, may be otherwise, and much better accommodated; I think, it may not be improper at present,*

sent, to instance in some few of 'em, which are most considerable. And here let any Person employ his utmost Skill, I defy him to shock the Faith of any judicious, and establish'd Christians.

51

Mica. v.
V. 2.

As for the Place of our Saviour's Nativity, 'tis said, *That a Ruler shall come forth from Bethlehem*, in the following Words, *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, tho' thou be little among the Thousands of Judah; yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, who is to be Ruler in Israel; whose Goings forth have been from of Old, from Everlasting.*

This Prophecy can't, with any Shew of Reason, be apply'd to those *Enthusiasts* and *Impostors*, as *Celsus* calls 'em, who say, they came down from Heaven, unless it plainly appears, that they were born at *Bethlehem*, or as the Words may be render'd, came forth from *Bethlehem*, to be Rulers of the People. As for our Saviour's being born at *Bethlehem*, if any Person be dissatisfy'd with the Prophecy of *Micah*, and the Account which is giv'n by the Evangelists, let him only consider, that the *Cave*, in which he was born, and the *Manger*, in which he lay, are to be seen at the fore-mention'd Place to this very Day. And this is a Truth so well known, and so credibly attested, that

ev'n

ev'n they, who are Strangers to the Christian Religion, are frequently heard to say, *Here is the Cave, in which, that JESUS, who is worship'd by the Christians was born.*

And 'tis my Opinion, that before our Saviour did make his Appearance in the World, the chief Priests, and the Teachers of the People, openly confess'd, and taught, that the Messiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*; and that ev'n the common People among the *Jews* were acquainted with this Prophecy, which was deliver'd, in express, and very familiar Terms. Hence it came to pass, that *Herod*, enquiring of the chief Priests, and Scribes, where the *Messiah* shou'd be born, receiv'd this Answer, that he shou'd be born at *Bethlehem*, in the Land of *Judea*, which was honour'd, by being the Place, from which no less a Person than King *David* himself did spring. Besides we read in *St. John's Gospel*, that the *Jews* said, that *Christ* was to be born at *Bethlehem*; which was in the Native Country of the fore-mention'd King. But when our Saviour was come into the World, those Persons, who left no Stone unturn'd, to oppose the Religion, which he introduc'd, did no longer teach, that the *Messiah* was to be born at *Bethlehem*,

Mathew
xxviii

V. 13.

V. 14.

52

plainly shewing, they belong'd to the same wretched Fraternity, with them, who prevail'd with the Souldiers, (who were appointed to guard the Sepulchre, and were Eye-Witnesses of his triumphant Resurrection), to say, *His Disciples came by Night, and stole him away*, while we slept; and said to 'em, *If this come to the Governor's Ears, we'll perswade him, and secure you*. Such is the Power of Prejudice, and the Love of Opposition, that it often happens, that we can't discern the most apparent Truths, and are loth to endure the Shame, which attends a Recantation, of those false, and dangerous Principles, which we have once embrac'd, and I think, 'tis every jot as easy, to leave any bad Habit, that we have unhappily contracted, tho' it be, as it were, rooted in our very Nature, as to leave the Opinions, which we formerly held, and which were very dear, and extremely familiar to us.

'Tis well known, we do, with a Kind of secret Reluctancy, forsake those Houses, Cities, and Villages, which by our long, and delightful Continuance in 'em, have render'd themselves familiar, and ev'n natural to us. And if it was not for unaccountable

countable Prejudice, ev'n the common People among the Jews, wou'dn't shut their Eyes, as they manifestly do, against the glorious Light of Scripture-Prophecy, nor deny the extraordinary, and often miraculous Circumstances, which attended the Life, and Death of our Blessed Saviour. But that Prejudice is one of the greatest Infirmities, which our Minds can possibly labour under, is plain to them, who consider, that 'tis with no small Difficulty, and Regret, that we leave the Opinions, which we receiv'd by Tradition, from our Parents, tho' perhaps, they may be such, as on mature Deliberation, do cover us with the deepest Shame, and fill us with Vexation, and Confusion.

So talk to an *Egyptian*, 'till your Heart do ake, and your Breath fails you, yet he'll be so far from renouncing his Religion, that he will persist in it, if it be possible, with greater Obstinacy than before, and rather dye, than be guilty of so horrid a Prophanation, as he accounts it, to eat, and pollute the sacred Flesh of Animals.

I thought it necessary, to dwell the longer on this Subject, that so we may return a solid Answer, to them, who, perhaps, may not stick to say,
If

If the Prophecies have so plain a reference, to your Saviour, as you say they have, how comes it to pass, that the Jews, whose Wisdom you so highly value, don't embrace the Christian Religion, as well, and as readily as you, and regulate their Practice, by those Precepts, which Christ, in some Sence, has left behind him?

. But let none reproach us, as if we were so wretchedly ignorant, as not to discern the Sophistry, of so weak an Argument, (since some, and I hope, many of us can make it appear upon Occasion, that Christianity is built on the most rational, and solid Grounds,) or reflect upon us, as if we were accountable, for the monstrous Blindness, and extravagant Practice of the Jews.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

53

I Might, if 'twere necessary, instance in another Prophecy, that was writ, many Ages before the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, in which Jacob prophesies concerning all his Children, and speaking concerning Judah, has these remarkable Words, *The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, 'till Shiloh come, and unto him shall the Gathering of the People be.* Now any one, who reads this Prophecy, which is of greater Antiquity, than their celebrated *Moses*, (tho' perhaps some Infidels may suspect it) can't but wonder, how Jacob cou'd foretell, that the Rulers of the Jewish Nation, which consisted of no less than Twelve Tribes, shou'd come of the Tribe of Judah.

This we see has been so evidently, and so remarkably verify'd, that the whole Body of the Jews, do take their Name from the fore-mention'd Tribe, which held the Reins of Government in their Hands, and manag'd 'em as they

they pleas'd, and 'tis Matter of Wonder to all, who are not bias'd by Prejudice, that the fore-mention'd Patriarch, shou'd not only foretell, that the governing Power shou'd be lodg'd in the Tribe of Judah, but also, that it shou'd come to a Period, at a prefixed Time, as the following Words import, *The Scepter shall not depart from*
 Gen. xlix V. 10. *Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, 'till Shiloh come, &c.*

And he is come, for whom the Supreme Authority was reserv'd, I mean, the *Messiah*, by whom the *True Glory* of the Tribe of Judah, was advanc'd to its greatest Height, he, I say, who was the Prince, whom God had promis'd, who might have laid a fairer Claim to that Title, *The Desire of Nations*, than any Person who ever went before, and I may safely say, than any who ever did, or will succeed him. For all Nations almost have believ'd in God thro' him, and have plac'd their Confidence in his Name, according to that Prophecy in *Isaiah*, *In his Name shall the Gentiles trust.*

This is he, who proclaim'd Liberty to them, who were held fast in the Bonds of Sin, and Satan, as all Men naturally are, and said to them, who were cover'd with spiritual Darkness, be ye Light in the Lord, according
 to

to that Famous Prophecy, *I will pre-* Isa. xlii.
serve thee, and give thee for a Cove- V. 6, 7.
nant of the People, to establish the Earth,
to cause to inherit the desolate Heri-
tages, that thou may'st say to the Prisoners
go forth; to them that are in Darkness,
shew your selves. And the vast Num-
ber of Persons, who flock'd from all
Parts to our Blessed Saviour, did abun-
dantly make good the Words which
follow, They shall feed in the Ways;
and their Pastures shall be in all high
Places.

C H A P. XLIV.

54

BUT because Celsus, who pretends;
 he don't want to be inform'd, of
 what the *Christians* hold, reproaches
 our Saviour, as if eitlier he was not
 assisted by his Father, or was unable
 to help himself, when he came to suf-
 fer; I must add one Thing here, and
 that is this, that the Prophets foretold
 his Sufferings, and the Reason why he
 underwent 'em, that they shou'd con-
 duce to the Advantage of Mankind
 in general, that he shou'd ev'n sacri-

fice

fice his Life for 'em, and be treated for their Sakes, as a condemn'd, and most vile Malefactor. They also foretold; that the Gentiles; who had no true Prophets, shou'd acknowledge him, to be sent from God, and that he himself, with respect to his outward Appearance in the World, shou'd be a mean, and very contemptible Person.

Isa. llii.

V. 13. 14

15.

The Words of the Prophecy are these; Behold my Servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted; extoll'd, and be very high. As many were astoni'd at thee; (his Visage was so marr'd, more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men) so shall he. sprinkle many Nations, the Kings shall shut their Mouths at him, for that which had not been told 'em; shall they see, and that which they had not heard, shall they consider. Who

Isa. llii.

V. 16 2.

has believ'd our Report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord reveal'd? For he shall grow up before him, as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground; he has no Form, nor Comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we shou'd desire him. He's despis'd, and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief: And we hid, as it were, our Faces from him; he was despis'd, and we esteem'd him not. Surely he has born our Griefs, and carry'd our Sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten

of

of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord has laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth: He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb; so he opens not his Mouth. He was taken from Prison, and from Judgment, and who shall declare his Generation? For he was cut-off out of the Land of the living, for the Transgression of my People was he stricken.

I remember, I made use of this Prophecy, in a Disputation, which I formerly had, with some Jewish Doctors, and one of 'em return'd the following Answer, that we must understand it, as relating to the whole Body of their own Nation, whose Dispersion, and many other Calamities, were Means, to gain Profelites to their Religion. And he explain'd those Words, *He has no Form, nor Comeliness*; and those Words, *That which had not been told 'em shall they see, and that which they had not heard, shall they consider*; and those Words, *He was wounded for our Transgressions,*
he

he was bruise'd for our Iniquities; I say, he explain'd 'em all, in Favour of the Sence, which he had giv'n 'em. On the contrary, I offer'd several substantial Arguments, to prove, that this Prophecy must be understood of a single Person; and by Consequence is not to be refer'd to an entire Nation, or great Number of People. I ask'd of whom those Words were spoke, *He has born our Grievs, and carry'd our Sorrows;* and those Words, *He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruise'd for our Iniquities;* and those Words, *By his Stripes we are heal'd.* For they are plainly meant of those Persons, who, whether Jews or Gentiles, were cur'd of their spiritual Diseases, by the Sufferings of our *Blessed Saviour*, to whom the Prophet, inspir'd by the Spirit of God, accommodates these several, and extraordinary Characters.

But that which most perplex'd 'em was that Expression, *For the Transgression of my People was he stricken.* For if this Prophecy has a Reference, to the whole Body of the Jews, 'tis difficult to make Sence of the foregoing Words. We must, therefore, understand 'em, of some single Person, and not of the whole Jewish Nation, and who can that Person be, but our Blessed Saviour, by whose bloody Stripes
all

all they, who believe in him, are immediately, and will at length be completely heal'd; I say, who, but our Blessed Saviour, who has spoil'd Principalities, and Powers, that usurp, and too long maintain a Tyranny, over the Souls of Men, and has made a Shew of 'em openly, upon his HONOURABLE CROSS. But the critical, and full Examination of this Prophecy, I shall reserve to a more proper Place, tho' I thought, 'twas necessary for me, to dwell a little upon it, on the Account, of what Celsus's Jew thought fit, to object against us.

CHAP. XLV.

56

ONE remarkable Thing that has led Celsus, and other Infidels, into gross Mistakes, in this important Affair, is their not knowing, or, at least, their not considering, that the Prophets speak of a twofold Coming of the Messiah; his first Coming, at which he was to appear, cloth'd with all the innocent Infirmities of humane Nature, and struggling with the pressing

sing Inconveniencies of a mean, and despis'd Condition, that so, living among Men, he might the more feelingly instruct 'em, in those Moral, and Divine Truths, which were important, and highly necessary, and inculcate upon 'em that awful Account, which they must shortly give, when they shall be summon'd, to appear, before the Bar of God; and his second Coming, at which he will appear, free from the least Allay, ev'n of natural Imperfection, and shine with the united, and unsully'd Rays, of his Original, and in some Sence, naked Divinity. 'Twou'd be tedious, to relate all the Prophecies, that have an immediate, and manifest Reference to our Blessed Saviour. I shall, therefore, at present confine my self, to that which we meet with, in the Forty fifth Psalm, which is entitul'd, *A Song of Loves*, and where our Saviour is expressly call'd by the Name of GOD. The Words are these,

Psal. xlv. *Grace is pour'd into thy Lips, therefore*
 V. 2, 3. *God has blest thee for ever. Gird thy*
Sword upon thy Thigh, O most Mighty,
with thy Glory, and thy Majesty, and in
thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of
Truth, and Meekness, and Righteousness,
and thy right Hand shall teach thee ver-
rible Things. Thine Arrows are sharp in
the Heart of the King's Enemies, where-
 by

by the People fall under thee: Thy Throne, O God, is for ever, and ever: The Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter. Thou lovest Righteousness, and hatest Wickedness, therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee, with the Oil of Gladness, above thy Fellows. Where take Notice, that the Prophetical Psalmist, making his Address to God, Whose Throne is for ever, and ever, and the Scepter of whose Kingdom is a right Scepter; says, that this Person was anointed by God, who was his God, and that he was anointed, above his Fellows, with the Oil of Gladness, because he lov'd Righteousness, and hated Wickedness.

I remember, that once I horribly baff'd a Jewish Doctor, with this very Prophecy, who being at a grievous Loss, to know what Answer he shou'd give me, had seasonable Recourse to a pityful Evasion, which was suitable enough, to the false Principles, he endeavour'd to maintain; viz. That those Words, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever, and ever, the Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter, were spoke of the Great God himself; and those Words, Thou lovest Righteousness, and hatest Wickedness, therefore God, ev'n thy God, has anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness, above thy Fellows; must be understood of the Messiah.

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CHAP. XLVI.

CELSUS's Jew continues his Discourse, with our Blessed Saviour, and says, *If, as you your self acknowledge, every Person, who comes into the World, by the general Concourſe of Providence, is a Son of God; What ſpecial Prerogative is there, which you can juſtly claim?* To which I answer, that they, who are no longer acted by a Spirit of Bondage, as St. Paul expreſſes it, but chooſe Virtue, for its intrinſick Worth, may, in a leſs noble Sence, be call'd, the *Sons of God*. But there's a vaſt Diſproportion, between thoſe, who are the Sons of God, as they are imperfectly endu'd, with Moral, and Chriſtian Virtues, and our Blessed Saviour, who is the *inexhauſtible Fountain*, from which their borrow'd Good do's entirely, and will for ever flow. The Words of St. Paul, which I juſt now refer'd to, are theſe, *Ye have*

Rom.viii.*not receiv'd the Spirit of Bondage, again*
 V. 15.*to fear, but ye have receiv'd the Spirit*
of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The

70 The Jew continues his Discourse, in the following Words, *Abundance of Persons will find Fault, with your pretended Saviour, for applying those Prophecies to himself, which, they think, may, at least as justly, be apply'd to them.* To this I answer, that I am apt to think, that *Celsus* didn't know of any Persons, who rival'd our Saviour, in his Miracles, and justly claim'd the Title of *Sons of God*, or *The Power of the Supream Majesty*. But because the sincere, and strong Affection, which I have for Truth, won't suffer me, to pass by any Thing, that ev'n seems to oppose the *Christian* Cause, I readily acknowledge, that before our Saviour's Incarnation, there was a certain Person, whose Name was Theudas, who appear'd among the *Jews*, pretending to be a mighty Man, after whose Decease, his deluded Followers were soon dispers'd. Some Time after, in the Days of the Taxing, (during which, as far as I can gather from Scripture, our Blessed Saviour was born) one *Judas* of *Galilee*, drew after him, a considerable Number of weak, and credulous *Jews*, who, affecting Novelties, cry'd him up, as a Man, endu'd with more than ordinary Wisdom, and was no sooner brought to condign Punishment, but his Doctrine

came immediately into Disrepute, or, at best, was only secretly maintain'd, by some few Persons, of mean Rank, and Figure. And after our Saviour appear'd, upon the Stage of the World, one *Dositheus*, a *Samaritan*, endeavour'd, to perswade his Country-men, that he was the very Person, to whom the Prophets had so plain a Reference, when they foretold the Coming of the *Messiah*, and some few Persons, I confess, there were, who seem'd heartily to embrace his Doctrine.

Here, I think, it will not be improper, to mention that wise Expression of *Gamaliel*, which we meet with, in the Acts of the Apostles, to shew, beyond all Contradiction, that the fore-mention'd Persons, were not intended in the Promise, which God gave, of sending the *Messiah*, and that neither of 'em deserv'd the honourable Title, of *The Son*, or *Power of God*; but that of all the Men, who ever appear'd, and made a Figure in the World, our Blessed Saviour was the only Person, who cou'd justly claim it.

Ag. v. If this Counsel, said he, or this Work be
V. 38. of Men, 'twill come to nought; but if it be of God, ye can't overthrow it, lest haply ye be found, ev'n to fight against God.

There was also one *Simon*, a *Magician*

cian, of *Samaria*, who endeavour'd by his *Magick*, to draw People after him, and for some Time he wasn't without his Followers, but I believe, there are now scarce thirty *Simonians* in the whole habitable World: Nay, perhaps I have exceeded the Number, since there are only a few near *Palestine*, and that Doctrine, which they embrac'd, did never obtain, in any other Parts, tho' its Authour did fondly imagine, that it wou'd soon, and easily reach, and happily engage, the most distant, and barbarous Nations in it's Favour. For they who know any Thing, of their celebrated *Simon*, owe their Knowledge, entirely to the Account, which we have of him, in the Acts of the Apostles. So that, were it not for the Christians, his very Name wou'd, before this Time, have been bury'd in oblivion, and 'twas sufficiently evident from Experience, that he bore none of the shining Characters, of one, who had a Divine Commission.

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CHAP. XLVII.

THEN Celsus's Jew, not keeping
 to the sacred Text, says, *That our*
Saviour boasted, that some wise Men of
the Chaldeans, being mov'd, by a secret
Persuasion, that he was born, came to
pay Divine Worship to him, in his In-
fancy, and that when they had acquainted
Herod, the Tetrarch, with it, he order'd
his Officers, to kill all the Infants, that
were about that Age, imagining, that
our Saviour wou'd incur the same Fate
with them, and thereby be prevented,
from ever coming to the Crown. Take
Notice, how grossly the Jew is mista-
ken here, who confounds the wise
Men, and the Chaldeans, not discerning,
that, for any Thing that appears to the
contrary, they might be of Different
Countrys, and Professions, and notori-
ously Falsifying the Account, which
we have of this Matter, in the Gos-
pels. And I know not how it comes to
pass, that he don't think fit, to ac-
quaint us, that the Star, which they
saw in the East, was the Ground of
 their

their secret Perswasion, that the *Messiah* was then born into the World. Let us see therefore, what matter of Discourse this Subject will afford us.

I confess, 'tis my Opinion, that the Star, that appear'd, at our Saviour's Nativity, was entirely new, and vastly different, from those which are commonly seen; whether in the superiour, or inferiour Orbs, and I am inclin'd to think, it might be much of the same kind, with those Comets, that appear for a Time, and have different Names assign'd 'em; by the *Greeks*, according to their different Figure. And I build my Opinion upon the following Grounds. It has been observ'd by Learned Authours, that when any considerable Alteration has happen'd, in the Face of Affairs, such Stars have expos'd themselves to View, as did presage some strange Revolutions of Empires, some dreadful Wars, or some such Accidents as these, which put the whole World into a terrible, and unusual Commotion. I have also read, in a Treatise concerning Comets, writ by *Cheremon the Stoick*, that sometimes they have presag'd very happy Events, and he produces several Instances, from very credible Historians, to make good the Assertion, which he there lays down.

If then, at the Establishment of some new Monarchy, or before some remarkable Scene of publick Affairs do's begin to open, these Comets, or Stars of the like Nature, do appear; 'tis no Wonder at all, that a Star shou'd be seen, at the Nativity of our Saviour, who was design'd by the All-wise God, to make so sudden, so great, and so happy an Alteration in the World, to publish a new, unadorn'd, and discountenanc'd Doctrine, not only to the *Jews*, and *Greeks*, but also to a vast Number of the most distant, and barbarous Nations of the World.

And this I may safely say, in Favour of the *Christian Religion*, that we don't meet with any, or at least with no Scripture-Prophecy, concerning the Appearance of such a Star, at such a Time, for Instance at the Establishment of such a Rising Empire, but the Star, that grac'd our Saviour's Nativity, was foretold by *Balaam*, as *Moses* gives

Numbers us an Account. *There shall come,* says
xxiv.v.17 *he, a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter*
shall rise out of Israel. But here I must
argue with the *Greeks*, and *Jews*, and
therefore shall be oblig'd, to dispute
against each Sort of Persons, from very
different Topicks. To the *Greeks*, I
have this to offer, that the *Magicians*,
who converse with *Demons*, and do,
with

with a most *Horrid Solemnity*, invoke their seasonable Assistance, for the most part attain the End, which they propose to themselves, unless a Divine Power interfere, that is Superiour to the *Demons*, or some Name be mention'd, that has a greater Force, than those Names, which are appropriated by 'em to the Art they practice. But if that shou'd happen, then all their *Magical Operations* are unavoidably lost, and they are, as it were, dazzl'd, and confounded with the bright Rays, of the Sun of Righteousness.

It seems to me, therefore, to be highly probable, that when our Saviour was born, and a Multitude of the Heavenly Host (as St. Luke do's credibly relate the Passage) prais'd God, saying, *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, and good Will towards Men*; the *Demons* were shock'd, and all their Hellish Measures most strangely disconcerted, not only by good Angels, who came down from Heaven, to celebrate the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour, but also by the Humane Soul of the Holy and Spotless *Jesus*, as being a happy Instrument of the Deity, which dwelt in so glorious, but inconceivable a Manner, ev'n in his Humane Nature. The Wise Men, therefore, being desirous, to perform
their

Luke ii.
V. 14.

their usual Operations, and failing in what they endeavour'd to effect, we may naturally suppose, enquir'd into the Reason of their bad Success, and were sensible, that something extraordinary must occur, to defeat their rais'd Expectations, and exceed the Power of the *Demons*, and when they saw a Sign in the Heavens, they had a natural Curiosity, to know its Meaning, and having perhaps consulted the Prophecies of *Balaam*, and this Prophecy of the Star, of which, *Moses* gives us an Account, and particularly those Words,

Numbers
xxiv. V. 17 *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh;* from hence they might frame this rational Conjecture, that the very Person, at whose Birth, 'twas prophesy'd, that a Star shou'd appear, was then actually born, and having a just Notion, that he was far Superior to all their *Demons*, they came to pay him, the just Tribute of Divine Adoration.

They steer'd their Course, therefore, to *Judaea*, being perswaded, that some great Prince was born, but ignorant of the Nature of his Kingdom, and the Place of his Nativity; and when they were happily come, to the Place where the young Child was; they offer'd Presents to him, that were lively Representations of his Divine, and Hu-

Humane Nature; viz. Gold, an Emblem of his Royal Power, Frankincense, to note to us his Divinity, and Myrrh, to signify his bitter Passion.

and to woud' mislikly posses the

CHAP. XLVIII.

SINCE therefore, 'twas the Saviour of Mankind, that was come into the World, who was God, and by Consequence, above the Angels; (tho' they are frequently employ'd as ministring Spirits, in the Behalt of Men) the Worship which the Wise-Men paid him, was abundantly recompens'd, by the Warning, which the Angel gave 'em, that they shou'dn't return to *Herod*, but depart into their own Country another Way. And 'tis no Wonder at all, that *Herod* shou'd seek to destroy the Infant-Saviour, tho' *Celsus's* Jew seems to doubt very much, of the Truth, of what we think was plain Matter of Fact. For Malice is so foolish, and so daring a Thing, that 'twill contend for the Victory, with the Providence of God it self. This Passion had so far the Ascendant over *Herod*, that he was fully perswaded, that the King of the

Jews

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Jews was born, and acted unaccountably, whether his Notion were true or false, and was so weak, that he didn't discern, that either our Saviour was the very Person, whom the Prophets foretold, to be the true *Messiah*, and so wou'd infallibly possess the Throne; or, on the contrary, was a meer Impostor, and by Consequence, there was no Ground for him, to disturb the Peace of his Mind, by any jealous Surmises. He resolv'd to destroy him, being hurry'd by his unruly Passion into the grossest Inconsistencies, and stir'd up without Doubt by the Devil, who, apprehending our Saviour to be an extraordinary Person, and a most formidable Enemy to his usurp'd Dominion, employ'd all his Wit, Malice, and Industry against him. But the Angel warn'd *Joseph*, to go with the young Child, and his Mother into *Egypt*. And how improbable soever, this may seem to be, on the first View; yet the due Series of Events, was very critically observ'd by Providence.

In the mean Time, *Herod* issu'd out Orders, that all the Infants, that were in *Bethlehem*, from two Years old, and under, shou'd immediately be put to Death, expecting that he, who was born King of the *Jews*, wou'd share

in the same common, and approaching Calamity.

For he didn't discern that invisible, and kind Hand of Providence, that takes Care of them, who are the proper Objects of its most watchful Protection, and upon whose Safety, the Good of Mankind does so evidently, and so greatly depend, and among which honourable Number, our Blessed Saviour deserves to be esteem'd the Chief, as being one, who vastly, and indeed, infinitely surpass'd all other Men, in real, and intrinsic Dignity.

For he was not sent into the World, to be an Earthly King, as Herod falsely imagin'd; but to enter on the Possession of such a Glorious Kingdom, as it became the Great God to bestow, on one, who was to procure a Happiness for his Subjects, that consists not entirely, or chiefly, in Things, which are in themselves indifferent, and frequently prove pernicious to the Owners, and was to govern 'em by such Laws, as are truly Divine, and so to take the most proper Methods, to render 'em completely, and for ever happy.

Therefore denying, that he was an Earthly King, and shewing, that his Kingdom was of a spiritual Nature, he says, *If my Kingdom were of this World, then wou'd my Servants fight,* Joh. xviii. V 36
that

that I shou'dn't be deliver'd to the Jews; but now is my Kingdom not from hence.

CHAP. XLIX.

IF Celsus had been aware of this, he wou'd never have talk'd so weakly, and so impertinently as he does. If, says he, Herod was afraid, that when you came to a fit Age to reign, you wou'd dispossess him of his Kingdom; why didn't you reign; when you were grown up to Tears of Discretion, and Maturity? On the contrary, tho' you pretend to be the Son of God; yet you are forc'd to go about like a Slave, and a Vagabond, and to sneak like a Malefactor, not having a Place, whereon you may comfortably lay your Head.

But 'tis far from being an Argument of a sordid Spirit, for a Person to use innocent, and common Prudence, that he may happily avoid the Dangers, with which he is surrounded, not from a slavish Fear of Death, but a sincere, and vehement Desire, with Submission to the Will of God, to prolong

long his Life, that he may be farther serviceable to the Publick, till a fair Opportunity, to lay down his Life, for the Promoting of the True, and Best Interest of Mankind, do's happily present it self.

That this was our Saviour's Case, is plain, to one, who is acquainted with the Design of our Blessed Lord, in those grievous Sufferings which he underwent, of which, according to my weak Ability, I have already, and I hope sufficiently, discours'd.

CHAP. L.

62

THEN that Celsus, with all his Knowledge, didn't so much as hit upon the exact Number of the Apostles, may be gather'd from the following Words, *Being attended, says he, with Ten, or Eleven Wicked Publicans, and Mariners, he went up and down with 'em, begging his Bread, from Door to Door, like a base, and most miserable Creature.*

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Let me therefore examine, what he says, and return him such an Answer, as I judge convenient. 'Tis plain then to those, who read the Gospels, with any tolerable Care, (which I'm apt to think, my bold, but blundering Antagonist never did) that our Saviour chose twelve Apostles, and that there was but one *Publican* among 'em, I mean St. *Mathew*; and by *Mariners*, as he promiscuously calls 'em, I suppose, he may mean *James* and *John*, because they left their Father *Zebedee*, to follow their Blessed Lord. For as for *Peter* and *Andrew*, that got their Livelyhood by their Nets, they were not so properly *Mariners*, as *Fishermen*, as the Scripture calls 'em.

X | We'll also suppose, that *Levi* the *Publican* was another, to whom he might have a Reference, tho' according to some Copies, that we have of St. *Mark's* Gospel, he was no Apostle.

As for the rest of that honourable Fraternity, we know not what Employments they were, by which they got their Maintenance, before they espous'd the Interest of our Blessed Saviour.

CHAP. LI.

SO that I may safely say, that 'tis plain to them, who examine into these Matters, with that Judgment, Care, and Impartiality, which is highly requisite, that the Apostles were acted by an extraordinary, and super-natural Power, when they publish'd the *Christian Religion* to the World; and made the carnal, and haughty Minds, of some of the worst of Men, submit to the commanding Authority of the Word of God.

For this wonderful Effect was not owing to the Charms of humane Eloquence, the Exactness of their Method; or those other Artifices, with which the Logick, and Rhetorick of the *Greeks*, do frequently, and perhaps, more than sufficiently, furnish too many subtil, and designing Persons.

I am of the Opinion, I confess, that if we cou'd suppose our Saviour, to have made Choice of Persons; qualify'd with the brightest humane Accomplishments;

to preach the Gospel, such as had the general Character, and Reputation, of Men of profound Wisdom, and universal Learning, who, by the Help of sublime Speculations, polite Language, and a graceful Elocution, cou'd win upon the Audience, and make the several Passions of their Hearers, serve their fordid, and vain-glorious Purposes, I say, if our Saviour had tak'n this Method, he might justly have been blam'd, for using the same carnal Policy, that was too apparent, in the Heads of the several Sects of Philosophers, and his Doctrine wou'd have wanted those legible Characters of its Divinity, which were stamp'd upon it, had it been maintain'd by sprightly Fancy, proper, and elegant Language, and harmonious Cadencies, and the Assent giv'n to it, wou'd too nearly have resembl'd that, which is giv'n to the Opinions of the Philosophers among the Pagans, and wou'd manifestly have had its Foundation laid in the *Wisdom of Men*, rather than the irresistible *Power of God*.

Now what Person, who looks on these *Fisher-men* and *Publicans*, who were not so much as taught, the very first Principles of Humane Literature, (as the Gospels acquaint us, and as *Celsus* is ready enough to believe) and yet

yet had such a Presence of Mind, that they were able, not only to discourse to their Country-men the *Jews*, concerning Faith in Christ, but also to preach the same Doctrine to other Nations, and were favour'd with most wonderful Success, I say, what Person who looks on these *Fishermen* and *Publicans*, will not presently enquire, whence they deriv'd this uncommon Power of Persuasion, and acknowledge, that our Saviour's Promise in the following Words, *Come after me, and I will make you Fishers of Men*; was evidently, and remarkably accomplish'd, in that Divine Power, which accompany'd the Preaching of the Apostles?

Mat. iv.
V. 19.

'Twas this, to which, St. Paul has so plain a Reference, when he says, *My Speech, and my Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom; but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power, that your Faith shou'dn't stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God.*

1 Cor. ii.
V. 4.

For as the Prophetical Psalmist speaks, who fore-told the Preaching of the Gospel, *The Lord gave the Word, great was the Company of those that publish'd it*; and as it is fore-told in another Place, *His Word runs very swiftly.*

Ps. lxxviii.
V. 11.

Ps. cxlviii.
V. 15.

We see, that *The Voice of the Apostles was heard thro' all the Earth*, and their Doctrine, and Fame too, was spread to the most distant Regions. They also, who hear this Doctrine, are fill'd with the Spirit of God, who accompanies the Preaching of it, as abundantly appears, by the Disposition of their Minds, the Tenor of their Conversations, and their vigorous Defence of the naked Truth, ev'n to the apparent Hazard of their Fortunes, their Reputations, and their Lives, tho' it can't be deny'd, but ought to be deeply lamented, that too many who have tak'n upon 'em the *Ministerial Function*, after all the Profession, which they make, of believing in God, thro' Christ, and after having seem'd to be wonderfully attracted by the bright, and almost irresistible Charms of Gospel-Grace, 'tis to be fear'd, did never feel the saving Impression of it on their Hearts, attended with a suitable Influence on their Lives, and Conversations.

And tho' I have already mention'd that Expression in the Gospel, according to St. Mathew, *The Harvest is great, but the Labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he wou'd send forth more Labourers into the Harvest*; I think it mayn't be improper

Mat. ix.

V. 37.

proper to repeat it, to shew, that our Saviour's Foreknowledge of the Entertainment, which his Doctrine wou'd meet with in the World; was a Divine Proof of its future, happy, and more than ordinary Effect upon the Minds of Men; a Doctrine, the good Success of which was far from depending on the Assistance of the most Learned Doctors, but was owing to that *Divine, and Miraculous Power*, that accompany'd the Apostles in their **SACRED MINISTRATIONS.**

CHAP. LII.

63

AND because *Celsus* represents 'em, not only as a Parcel of ignorant Fellows, but also as a Club of most scandalous Creatures, vile *Publicans*, and *Mariners*; I answer, it seems he assents to some Passages in the Gospels, whereby, he thinks, he can support his Cause, but rejects, when he thinks fit, the Authority of the Evangelists themselves, that he may not be oblig'd to acknowledge, and reverence thate Characters of Divinity,

which are so legible in their Writings.

But when he sees, with what Faithfulness they relate, ev'n those Things, that seem to lessen their Esteem, and manifestly expos'd 'em to the greatest Dangers, he ought certainly to believe the rest as being divinely inspir'd, and by consequence, infallibly true, and of the highest Importance to us.

Barnabas, I confess, in his *Catholic Epistle*, (from whence 'tis probable, that Celsus has borrow'd his disadvantageous Remarks upon the Apostles of our Blessed Saviour) says, "That Jesus chose such Persons to the Apostolical Function, as were wicked to the last Degree." And in the Gospel according to St. Luke, St. Peter says to Jesus, Lord depart from me, for
 Luke v. V. 8. *I am a sinful Man.* And St. Paul, in one of his Epistles to Timothy, says,
 1 Tim. i. V. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, of whom I am chief; tho' at last he became a most Eminent Apostle.*

And I know not, whether Celsus's Memory, or his Judgment, is most defective, when he makes no Mention of St. Paul, who, next to our Blessed Saviour, was the most remarkable Founder of the Christian Churches.

But

But 'tis probable, he thought it wou'd not serve his Cause, and that, if he had tak'n Notice of him, he had oblig'd himself to have giv'n a rational, and distinct Account, how a Person, who once persecuted the Church of God, spit his Venom, and employ'd his most vigorous Endeavours, in Opposition to the Christians, insomuch that he thirsted for their Blood, was so strangely alter'd on a sudden, that he spread the Gospel from *Jerusalem* to *Illyricum*, endeavouring to avoid building on the Foundation, which another had laid, and making it his Choice, and Business, to preach to them, who had never heard the glad Tydings of Salvation by a Crucify'd Redeemer.

CHAP.

CHAP. LIII.

WHAT Absurdity is there then, in supposing, that our Saviour, being desirous to shew Mankind, what Sovereign Remedies he had, and was willing to apply to the distemper'd Souls of Men, shou'd make Choice of Persons, that were notoriously wicked, and work such a sudden, and surprizing Change upon 'em, that by the Purity of their Lives, they became very honourable Examples to them, who were afterwards converted by their Ministry?

64 If they, who have reform'd their Manners, must be upbraided with the Crimes, which they formerly committed, then we may as well bring in a most heavy Charge against *Phedon* himself, ev'n after he had devoted his Time, and Strength, to the Study of Philosophy, because History acquaints us, that *Socrates* took him, from a Place, where Debauchery was practis'd, without Fear, or Regret, and put him upon rational, and learned Studies,

Studies, in which, in Process of Time, he was far from being a mean Proficient.

We might also condemn Philosophy, it self, by Reason of the extravagant Courses, which *Polemon* the Successor of *Zenocrates* had formerly tak'n. But in Truth, this Consideration do's greatly brighten, and recommend their Character, that by the Help of so *Divine a Thing* as *Philosophy*, they cou'd be brought to resolve on a virtuous, and severe Course of Life, in Spight of those bad Impressions, with which they were forc'd to struggle, and over which they did, with no small Difficulty, obtain an honourable, and happy Conquest.

And I scarce know, whether the *Greeks* can produce any Instances of this kind, in any other Persons, besides *Phadon* and *Polemon*, or at best, they can name but very few Persons, who ever left their Intemperance and Debauchery to apply their Minds, to the entertaining, and useful Study of Philosophy.

But in the *School of Christ*, besides the *twelve Apostles*, who had the Honour to be contemporary with him, we see daily, a far greater Number of Persons, that become virtuous, and pious, and join in a Blessed Chorus, acknowledging, with the deepest shame, and Sorrow,
the

the many false, and almost fatal Steps, which formerly they took. *We our*
 Tit. iii. *selves* (says the Apostle) *were some-*
 V. 3.4. *times foolish, and disobedient, deceiv'd,*
-serving diverse Lusts and Pleasures, living
in Malice, and Envy, hateful, and hating
one another. But after that the Kind-
ness, and Love of God our Saviour, to-
ward Man appear'd, not by Works of Right-
eousness which we have done, but accor-
ding to his Mercy he sav'd us, by the
Washing of Regeneration, and the Re-
newing of the Holy Ghost, which he
 P'sal. cvii. *shed on us abundantly. For as the Pro-*
 V. 20. *phetical Psalmist speaks, He sent his*
Word, and heal'd 'em, and deliver'd 'em
from their Destructions. I might add, that
Chrysippus, in a Book which he has
writ, Entitul'd, The Art of Curing the
Disorders of the Humane Passions, en-
deavours to lay down proper, and
effectual Rules, for the Management
of those, which disturb the Peace of the
Mind, and to that end, he argues up-
on the Principles of several Sects of
Philosophers, not examining, which of
'em are most agreeable to Truth, and
has the following Words. " If, says he,
" Pleasure be esteem'd the chief Good,
" the Passions may, and ought thus
" to be cur'd, and if there be three
" Kinds of Good, they are to be cur'd
" after this different Manner.

Now

Now they, who find Fault with the *Christian Religion*, do wilfully Neglect, to consider, how many unruly Passions are successfully govern'd by it, what a Stop it puts to that rapid Torrent of Vice, and Immorality, which is too visible in the World, and what extravagant, savage, and ev'n *Diabolical* Tempers it has frequently, happily, and very suddenly conquer'd. Certainly, it ought to raise their Admiration, and constrain 'em, to make the most thankful Acknowledgements to Almighty God, to consider, what vast, and apparent Advantage the Publick reaps, from those proper, and most excellent Methods, which our Saviour took, for the Reformation of Manners, and one wou'd think, that if they won't allow Christianity to be the True Religion; yet they must confess, that it conduces very much to the true Interest of Mankind, and which is more, has an *Immediate*, and *Principal* *Regard* to their *better*, and *immortal* *Part*.

CHAP.

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CHAP. LIV.

AND our Saviour has so effectually consulted, ev'n the Temporal Advantage of his Followers, that he wouldn't have 'em to be rash, and precipitate, but gives 'em this necessary Lesson, *When they persecute you in one City, flee unto another*; and teaches 'em by his own Example, not to run into needless Dangers.

Celsus takes Occasion, ev'n from hence, to form an Accusation against him, in the Person of a Jew, in the following Words, *You run up and down, with your Disciples*. But as for the Charge, which is here brought against our Blessed Saviour, we meet with a Parallel Case, ev'n in the Histories; which the Greeks have publish'd. For Aristotle, that Famous Philosopher, when he saw, he shou'd be condemn'd, as a wicked Person, by reason of some peculiar, and in some Sence, dangerous Notions he advanc'd, which, as the Athenians thought, did give too great Encouragement to Licentiousness, took an Oppor-

Opportunity to go from *Athens*, and remov'd his School to *Chalcis*, making the following Apology, to some of his Acquaintance, " Let us leave *Athens*, "
 " (*says he*) that we mayn't suffer it, "
 " to be in the Power of the *Athenians*, "
 " to re-act that horrid Impiety, which "
 " they plainly discover'd, by their ill "
 " Treatment of *so great a Genius*, as "
 " the World knows *Socrates* to have "
 " been, and to commit a most griev- "
 " ous Offence against *so sacred a Thing* "
 " as *Philosophy*.

CHAP. LV.

CELSVS adds, *That our Saviour, running up and down with his Disciples, was forc'd to beg his Bread, like a fordid Wretch.*

But pray let him inform us, where he has rak'd up all these scurrilous Expressions. I confess, we read in the Gospels, that certain Women, that were cur'd of their Infirmities, among which was *Susannah*, did readily distribute some Part of their Substance, to furnish the Disciples, with what was necessary for the Support of Life. But

But pray, what Philosopher, who employs his Time, and Strength, with some Regard to the Benefit of his Relations, and Friends, and indeed of Mankind in general, wou'd refuse to have his Wants supply'd? Or, did it become the Philosophers, to accept the seasonable, and generous Assistance of their Friends, and others; but argue a *base and sordid Spirit*, in our Blessed Lord, or those who became his Followers?

66

CHAP. LVI.

THEN the Jew, whom Celsus personates, continues his Discourse with our Saviour, in the following Words, *What Necessity was there, that, when you were an Infant, you shou'd be carry'd into Egypt, to avoid being kill'd? For surely, it didn't become a God, to be afraid of Death. An Angel, it seems, was dispatch'd from Heav'n, to bid You, and some of your nearest Relations, betake your selves to Flight, lest you shou'd be found, and be put to Death. But cou'dn't Almighty God, who, as we are told,*

did employ his Angels for your Direction, and Assistance, preserve his Son, as easily in Judea, as in Egypt?

Celsus thinks, that there was nothing extraordinary in the Humane Body, and Soul of our Blessed Saviour, and ridiculing his precious Blood, that was shed upon the Cross, he says, 'twas not

Such Blood as from the Immortal Gods do's Hom. II. Lib. 5.
(flow. V. 34.

But we, who give Credit to our Saviour, when he gives a Testimony of his Divinity, in the following Words, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;* John xiv. V. 6. and in other Parallel Places, and when he bears Witness to the Truth of his Humanity, in the following Expression, *Now ye seek to kill me, a Man, who has told you the Truth:* I say, we, who believe our Saviour, when he speaks thus of himself, do assert, and maintain, that he had *Two Natures*, the one *Divine*, and the other *Humane*, and that since he came into the World, with an Intention to live, in some respects, like the rest of Men, 'twas highly incongruous, that he shou'd run upon a Precipice, and be fond of Misery, and Death. John viii. V. 40.

O

'Twas

Mat. i.
V. 20.

'Twas fit, he shou'd be directed, and govern'd by them, to whom the Care of his Education did belong, and that the Angel's Orders shou'd be strictly, and religiously observ'd, and the same Angel which said at first, Joseph, *thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee, Mary thy Wife, for that which is conceiv'd in her, is of the Holy Ghost*; said afterwards, *Arise, and take the young Child, and his Mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there, until I bring thee Word, for Herod will seek the young Child, to destroy him.*

And I see nothing in this whole Account, that ev'n seems to shock our Reason, and destroy our Faith. For we read elsewhere, that Joseph was warn'd by God in a Dream, and that such Apparitions as these have been, is a Truth, in the firm Belief of which, Experience it self may, I think, sufficiently confirm us. What Absurdity is there then, upon the whole, in supposing, that our *Blessed Saviour*, who assum'd the *Humane Nature*, shou'd act with the *Prudence of a Man*, in endeavouring to keep out of the Way of impending Calamities, not as if he cou'dn't have avoided 'em by his *Infinite Power*, without taking such Measures as he did; but because 'twas consistent with the Will of God, and with

Origen against Celsus.

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with the Nature of Things, that his Life shou'd be preserv'd; *In the Use of Means*, and not by a *Continu'd Course of Super-natural, and Miraculous Events.*

'Twas more agreeable to the Dictates of Infinite Wisdom, that our Saviour shou'd be carry'd by his Parents into *Egypt*, and that he shou'd tarry there, 'till they heard of the Death of *Herod*, than that he shou'd stay in his Native Country, and yet be preserv'd, from the Evils to which he was expos'd, being better arm'd than with *Pluto's Helmet*, and secur'd from the Rage of his malicious Enemies, by their being struck, like the *Sodomites* of old, with sudden Blindness. For such a Series of miraculous Appearances, had been very unsuitable to his great Design; of acquainting the World, as a Man authoriz'd by the Testimony of God himself, that the *TRUE SON of GOD*, the *ETERNAL WORD*, the *WISDOM*, and *POWER of GOD*, did gloriously, tho' wonderfully reside, in the *Humane Nature* of the *INCARNATE JESUS*.

But 'tis not my Business at present, to speak fully of the *Two Natures*, that were united, in the Person of our *Blessed Saviour*, since there is a Particular, and it I may so say, a Do-

mestick Dispute between us, concerning that Difficult, and Important Point.

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CHAP. LVII.

THEN Celsus's Jew, as if he had been educated in the Schools of the Greeks, and instructed in their Learning, says, *That the Ancient Fables, that attribute a Divine Original to Perseus, Amphion, Æacus, and Minos, tho' they be not in Strictness true; yet do display the Actions of these Persons, as being great, and wonderful, and above the Sphere of Humane Nature. But for your Part, what did you ever say, or do, that was worthy of Admiration, tho' you were openly challeng'd, to give convincing Proofs, that you were the Son of God.*

In Answer to this, I need only ask the Greeks, whether they can shew, that any of the fore-mention'd Persons, did any extraordinary Service to the World, or perform'd any great Exploit, to induce future Ages, to believe the Truth of those Fables, which

which represent 'em to us, as being deriv'd from a *Divine Original*.

But I defy 'em, to instance in any of the Actions of these *Fabulous Herops*, that deserv'd to be nam'd, much less compar'd, with what our Saviour did; unless they will refer us to their own Fables, and Histories, and have us to believe 'em, without any more ado, and disbelieve our Histories, of the Truth, and Importance of which, we have all the Evidence, that we can reasonably desire.

We say, and know, that the *Divine Power* of our *Blessed Saviour*, has been sufficiently seen, and happily felt, thro' the whole habitable World, where any Churches are founded, that consist of Persons, reclaim'd from many exorbitant Vices.

And the *Name* of *JESUS*, at this very Day, composes the ruff'd Minds of Men, dispossesses *Demons*, cures Diseases, and works a meek, gentle, and amicable Temper, in all those Persons, who make Profession of Christianity, from an higher End, than their worldly Interest, and sincerely believe, what it teaches us, concerning *God*, and *Christ*, and a *Future Judgment*.

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C H A P. LVIII.

THEN *Celsus*, foreseeing, how many remarkable Actions, that were perform'd by our Saviour, might be mention'd by us, to his Honour, a few of which, I have related, makes as if he granted the Truth, of what is writ, concerning the Diseases, that were cur'd, the Dead that were rais'd to Life, and the few Loaves; with which a great Multitude was fed, and of which many Fragments did remain, and those strange Accounts we meet with in the Gospel-History, and immediately adds the following Words, *Well, let us suppose, that you really did these Things you talk of.* But in the same Breath, he quite unravels what he had said before, and sets them on a Level, with the Operations, that are perform'd by *Magicians*, who pretend to do mighty Things, and having study'd *Magick* in *Egypt*, get a little Money out of People's Pockets, by practising their Art in the open Forum, dispossessing *Demons*, curing Distempers,

pers, calling back departed Souls, and representing to the deluded Sight, a Table spread with imaginary Dainties, and Animals, that seem to move of their own Accord, but have no inward Spring of Life, and Motion.

His Words are these, *Pray must we esteem the Persons, who perform these wonderful Operations, to be the Sons of God, or must we not rather esteem 'em to be vile Wretches, that are well-vers'd, it seems, in a Diabolical Art?*

You see here, that he allows an extraordinary Power in *Magick*, tho' by the Way, I'm much mistak'n, if he isn't the very Person, who writ several Books, in which, he directly maintains the contrary.

And yet, because he thinks, it may serve his Cause, he compares the Actions of our *Blessed Saviour*, with the Operations of *Magicians*. Indeed, there had been some Ground, for making this invidious Comparison, if our *Saviour* had made such a *Vain Shew of Miracles*, as the *Magicians* do.

• Their Design also, whatever Wonders they may effect, by the Assistance of the Devil, is not to reform the Manners of Men; nor have such *Vain Amusements* the least Tendency, to beget in Persons a *True Fear of God*, and so to regulate their Actions, that

they may be honourably acquitted, when they shall be summon'd, to appear before his Awful Bar.

The fore-mention'd Persons, don't so much as aim at any Thing of this Kind, and if they did, of all Persons in the World, they wou'd be most unfit for so great an Undertaking, since they themselves, are guilty of the most notorious Crimes. Whereas our *Blessed Saviour*, who design'd by his Miracles, to reform the Manners of them, who were Eye-Witnesses of what he did, gave not only his Followers, but all Mankind, a *Bright Example of Unaffected Virtue, and Piety*, that they, who were to publish his Excellent Doctrine, might at once be directed, and encourag'd, to acquaint their Hearers with the Mind of God, and that the fore-mention'd Persons, being more convinc'd by the *Native Beauty*, of the *Christian Religion*, and the *Holy Lives* of their Teachers, than by the *Miracles* that were wrought, might in all their Actions, have a sincere, and sacred Regard to the Honour of God, and the Interest of their Dear, and Ever Blessed Redeemer.

Now, if the whole Course of our *Saviour's Life* was such, as I have represented it, without using any Artificial Colours, and Bold Figures to em-
blazon

blazon it, as we know, is too frequently the Case of many, of the *feign'd Heroes* of *Antiquity*; how absurd a Thing is it, to compare it with the cursed Operations of *Magicians*, and is it not highly agreeable to the Dictates of impartial Reason, to believe, that he was GOD, as he himself assures us, and condescended to assume the *Humane Nature*, for our *Common*, and *Everlasting Benefit*.

CH A P. LIX.

69

THEN *Celsus*, confounding Things at a most miserable Rate, and borrowing, what is peculiar to one Sect of *Christians*, that he may, the more successfully, reproach the whole Body of 'em, says, *Certainly, a God won'd never have such a Body as yours, that is so contemptible, as being liable to so many, and so considerable Imperfections.*

In Answer to this, we say, he assum'd *A Humane Body*, (being conceiv'd in the Womb of the *Blessed Virgin*,) which render'd him capable of Suffering, and Dying, in some Respects,

spects like the rest of Men. In this Sence, we may truly say, he was a miserable Person, *Being tempted in all* Heb. iv. *Things, as we are, yet without Sin.* For V. 15. *With us, 'tis beyond all Doubt, that He committed no Sin, neither was Guile* 1 Pet. ii. *found in his Mouth,* and that God did V 22. *deliver him up as a Spotless Sacrifice, for the Sins of an Apostate World. Then Celsus says, the Body of a God, wou'd never have been form'd like your's.* But he can't deny, that if our Saviour was born, as we say, he was, then ev'n his Body had, in some Sence, a Stamp of Divinity upon it, and might be call'd the Body of the Great God himself. On the contrary, he disbelieves, and ridicules the Account, we have, of our Saviour's Conception by the Holy Ghost, and thinks he was begotten in Adultery, by one *Panthera*, a Souldier, on the Body of her, whom we call the *Blessed Virgin*, and that made him say, *the Body of a God, wou'd never have been form'd like your's.* But I think, I have said enough on that Head already, to satisfy any Impartial, and Candid Reader.

CHAP. LX.

70

C E L S U S goes on, *neither* says he, *Do's the Body of a God stand in Need of such Food, for its Nourishment, and Support, as that with which yours is supply'd; as if he cou'd shew out of the Four Evangelists, not only that he ate, but also by what Food his frail Nature was maintain'd. But be it so, I grant he ate the Passover with his Disciples, and not only made Use of the following Words, With Desire,* Luk. xxii V. 15. *I have desir'd to eat this Passover with you; but did actually partake, of what was provided for him. I grant also, that being thirsty, he drank at Jacob's Well. But what is this to the Purpose? 'Tis said expressly, he ate Fish, ev'n after he was risen from the dead. And this agrees very well with what we say, viz. That he assum'd a Real, and not a Phantastical Body, and was conceiv'd in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin.*

Then Celsus says, *A God had no need of such a Voice, nor such Methods*

of

of Persuasion. But this, I think, is one of the most frivolous Objections, that he cou'd possibly have rais'd against us. For I might tell him, that *Apollo*, one of the *Gods* of the *Greeks*, who goes under the Name of *Pythian*, and *Didymæan*, made use of such a Voice, when the Oracle was giv'n by the *Pythian Priestess*, or the *Priestess* of *Miletum*. And yet the *Greeks* don't take Occasion from hence, to call in Question, much less to deny, the *Divinity* of *Apollo*, or any other *God*, who gave out Oracles, at some convenient Place.

Now how much more, did it conduce to the *Spiritual Advantage* of the *World in General*, that *God* shou'd reveal his Will in the Person of our *Blessed Saviour*, who spoke with such *Authority*, and *Power*, that he made a secret, but irresistible Impression upon the *Minds of Men*.

CHAP. LXI.

71

THEN *Celsus*, whose wicked Opinions, and Practices, render him hateful to that God, who is a Lover of right Reason, and unaffected Virtue, reproaches our *Saviour* in the following Words, *All his Miracles discover'd him to be a Person, hateful to God, and a notorious, and vile Impostor.* But if we critically enquire into the Nature of Things, and the Signification of the foregoing Words, we shall find, that in Propriety, and Strictness of Speech, no Person, how wicked soever he may be, can have this Character giv'n him, that he is *hated of God*. For the following Expression carries Abundance of Truth, as well as Weight in it; *viz. Thou lovest all Things that are, and hatest nothing, which thou hast made; for never wou'dst thou have made any Thing, if thou hadst hated it.* Wif. xi.
V. 24.

If we meet with any Expressions in the Writings of the Prophets, that seem to intimate, that *God hates his Creatures*, we must interpret 'em by
this

this general, and necessary Rule, that the Scripture, when it speaks of God, do's often cloath him, as it were, with those very Passions, which are frequently working in Humane Breasts.

But to what Purpose is it, to return an Answer, to a Person, who ev'n in a Discourse, Entitul'd, *A True Relation*, takes the Liberty, to give Vent to his Passion, in most unjust, and severe Invectives, and to treat our *Blessed Saviour*, as if he were, like him, a Notorious, and Vile Impostor.

For such Language, as he gives him, don't become a Man, who pretends to *Reason*, and *Demonstration*; tho' he discovers at once, his Want both of Sence, and Breeding. On the contrary, he ought to have fairly stated the Controversy, which there is between us, to have examin'd Matters, with the greatest Impartiality, and Exactness, and shou'd have avoided; as much as might be, all needless, and ridiculous Digressions, and Tautologies.

But because *Celsus's Jew*, do's no longer continue his Discourse with our *Blessed Saviour*, I shall draw my first Book to a Conclusion, and if God will grant me the Knowledge of his Truth, which is able to overthrow,
tho'

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tho' not wholly to *extirpate* Error, according to that Expression, *Destroy 'em by thy Truth*, I shall return an Answer, to what *Celsus* offers, as personating a *Jew*, directing his Discourse to those of his Native Country, who are suppos'd, to be unhappily, as he imagines, brought off from *Judaism*, to an open Profession of the Religion, which we embrace.

CHAS. H. HARRIS

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Origen against Celsus :

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Origen against Celsus :

C H A P. I.

MY First Book in Answer to *Celsus's* Discourse, Entitul'd, *A True Relation*, ending where he ceases to personate a *Jew*, discoursing with our *Blessed Saviour*, and being swol'n to a convenient Bulk, I resolv'd to compose a second, and therein, I shall endeavour to confute, what the same pretended *Jew* has to offer, to those of his own Country, who are inwardly perswaded of the Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Religion.

4 Origen against Celsus.

And I confess, I can't but wonder, that since *Celsus* was so fond of speaking in the Person of a *Jew*, he didn't make him direct his Discourse to the *Gentiles*, rather than to his own Country-men. For 'twou'd have carry'd with it, a far more plausible Appearance, if it had been directed by him, to those, who embrac'd the Religion which we profess, and were *Gentiles*, like our selves. But it seems, this mighty Man, with all his Knowledge, to which he makes such great Pretences, did not know, or at least, do's seem to me, not duely to consider, the Nature of that Figure of Speech, which we make use of, when we speak in the Person of another.

Let us see therefore, what he says, to those *Jews*, who embrac'd the Christian Religion. He says, *That suff'ring themselves, to be most shamefully deluded by our Saviour, they left the Religion of their Ancestors, and alter'd both their Name, and their Course of Life.*

But he don't consider, that the *Jews*, who believ'd in our *Blessed Saviour*, did not totally renounce the Law of their justly-admir'd Progenitors, and Fore-Fathers; but liv'd in the Observance of it, deriving their Appellation, from a Word, that denotes the Poverty of the meer Letter of the Law.

For

Origen against Celsus.

5

For *Ebion* in the *Hebrew* Language, signifies *Poor*, and the converted *Jews*, were call'd by the Name of *Ebionites*. And *St. Peter* himself, for a considerable Time, observ'd the *Jewish* Rites, that are prescrib'd by the Law of *Moses*, as not having yet learn'd, ev'n from our *Blessed Saviour*, to ascend, as it were, from their literal to their spiritual Meaning, as we have the Matter related to us, in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*. On the *Morrow*, as they went on their Journey, and drew nigh unto the City, Peter went up upon the House-Top to pray, about the sixth Hour. And he became very hungry, and wou'd have eaten; but while they made ready, he fell into a Trance, and saw Heaven open'd, and a certain Vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great Sheet, knit at the four Corners, and let down to the Earth; wherein were all Manner of Four-footed Beasts of the Earth, and Wild Beasts, and Creeping Things, and Fowl of the Air. And there came a Voice to him, rise Peter, kill, and eat. But Peter said, not so Lord, for I have never eaten any Thing, that is common or unclean. And the Voice spake to him again the second Time, what God has cleans'd, that call thou not common.

Acts x.
V. 9,
&c.

You see here, that St. Peter himself, that Eminent Apostle, is represented to us, as retaining the Jewish Distinction, between *Clean*, and *Unclean Meats*; and 'tis plain, from what follows in the History, that nothing less than a Vision cou'd engage him, to preach the Doctrine of Faith in Christ to *Cornelius*, who was not descended from the *Israelites*, and to his Friends that attended him. For he being a *Jew*, and observing the Traditions of the Jewish Church, had a contemptible Notion of the *Gentiles*.

And the Apostle *Paul*, in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, acquaints us, that St. Peter, for Fear of displeasing the *Jews*, refus'd to eat with the *Gentiles*. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the *Gentiles*; but when they were come he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the Circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carry'd away with their Dissimulation. And it was not, I think, wholly incongruous, that they shou'd comply in some measure, with the Jewish Rites, who were entrusted with the Apostleship of the Circumcision: For they, who seem'd to be Pillars, gave *Paul*, and *Barnabas*, the right Hand of Fellowship, the former Persons directing their

Gal. ii.

V. 12.

their Course to the Circumcision. But need I say, that they who preach'd to the *Jews* withdrew, and separated themselves from the *Gentiles*, when the Apostle *Paul* himself became a *Jew* to the *Jews*, that he might win upon 'em. We read therefore, in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, that he offer'd an Oblation upon the Altar, to shew that he hadn't altogether renounc'd the *Jewish* Law, in which he had been educated, and of which he was once so passionate an Admirer.

Had *Celsus* known all this, he wou'd never have introduc'd a *Jew*, addressing himself to those, who were converted from *Judaism* to the Christian Faith, in the following Manner. *What is the Matter*, says he, *my dearly beloved Country-men*, that you have on a sudden renounc'd the Religion of your *Fathers*, and *Ancestors*, and suffer'd your selves to be so shamefully deluded by your pretended Saviour, as to be prevail'd with to alter your Name, and Course of Life.

CHAP. II.

BUT because I have already mention'd St. Peter, and the rest of those, who preach'd the Doctrine of Faith in Christ, to the Circumcision, I think, it may not be improper, to quote a Passage of our Saviour's in St. John's Gospel, and a little to explain
John xvi. it ; I have says he, many Things, yet V. 12, 13. to say unto you, but ye can't bear 'em now. But when he (the Spirit of Truth) is come, he will guide you into all Truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.
Now I ask Celsus's Jew, what were these Things, that our Saviour had to say to his Disciples, which, under their present Circumstances, they were not in a Capacity to relish ? Was not this his Desire, viz. to instruct 'em, since they were Jews, and by Consequence, acquainted with the Letter of the *Mosaick* Law, I say, to instruct 'em, in the true Sence of the Law, which the Types, and Ceremonies, under the Legal Dispensation, did but imperfectly represent

represent, and to give 'em a new Light into those good Things to come, of which, the various Rites concerning *pure*, and *impure Meats*, and *Drinks*, concerning *Festivals*, *New-Moons*, and *Sabbaths*, were all but obscure, and in themselves, very mean, and contemptible Shadows?

These, without Doubt, were the Things, which their Blessed Lord, wou'd have communicated to 'em. But knowing very well, how difficult a Thing it is, to disengage the Mind, from those Notions, which I had almost said, were of as early a Date, as its own Original, and are daily more deeply rooted, in our very Nature, by the strong Prejudices of our Birth, and Education, and especially, when one looks upon 'em, as having the Awful Stamp of a Divine Authority, and by Consequence, as being too important, and too true, to be call'd in Question, or but slightly regarded; knowing, I say, and considering, how difficult a Thing it is, to convince Persons, under such unhappy Circumstances, and to perswade 'em, that the Ceremonial Law was Loss, and Dung, in Comparison of the True Religion, he prudently waited for a more convenient Time, and differ'd his Discourse, 'till after his Bloody Death

Death, and triumphant Resurrection.

And indeed, if he had talk'd to them, of Things, that exceeded the Bounds, of their present, and narrow Capacity, he might have shock'd their Faith in him, as the *SON* of the *LIVING GOD*.

And I leave any one to judge, whether this be not the most natural Sence of the following Words; *I have*

John xvi. *yet many Things to say unto you, but ye*
V. 12. *can't bear 'em now.* For there were

several Explications to be giv'n of the Law, with Respect to its Spiritual Meaning, which ev'n our Saviour's Disciples at that Time were not duely dispos'd to hear, because they had been born, and bred among the *Jews*, and since their Religion, consisted very much of those Things, which were Types, and Shadows of the Gospel-Dispensation, I'm inclin'd to think, that 'tis upon that Account, that our Saviour makes Use of the following Words,

V. 13. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth,* as if he had said, he shall lead you into the true, and full Sence of those Things, viz. Types, and Figures, which you were conversant with, and whereby you imagin'd, you paid God, the true Worship, which was due to him, and requir'd by him.

And the fore-mention'd Promise,
which

which our Saviour made to his Disciples, was abundantly fulfill'd to the Apostle *Peter*, when the Spirit of God shew'd him in a Vision, all Sorts of Animals, Birds, and Four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things, and said to him, *Rise, Peter, kill, and eat.* And indeed, at that Juncture of Time, he was so fond of his former Religion, that he return'd this Answer, ev'n to the Voice, which he heard from Heaven, *Not so Lord, for I have never eaten any Thing, that is common, or unclean.* But at length, his Understanding was enlighten'd, as appears from the following Words, *What God has cleans'd call not thou common.*

And after that Instructive Vision, the Spirit of Truth, leading *Peter* into all Truth, acquainted him with those Things, which he cou'dn't bear, while our Saviour was present with him in the Flesh. But I shall have Occasion hereafter, to speak of those, who adhere, to the literal Sence of the *Mosaick Law*.

CHAP. III.

MY Business at present is to shew, that *Celsus* betrays his wretched Ignorance, in representing a Jew, addressing himself to those of his Native Country, who were converted to the Christian Faith, in the following Words, *What's the Matter, my dearly beloved Country-men, that you have renounc'd the Law of your Fathers?*

For how can they be said to renounce the Law of their Fathers, who severely blame Persons for not adhering to it. Tell me, says the Apostle, Gal. iv. V. 21. *ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law? For 'tis written, that Abraham had two Sons, and so on to those Words, Which Things are an Allegory.*

And how can they be said, to renounce the Law of their Fathers, who are continually making mention of it, as if they were proud, of shewing the honourable Regard, which they still pay to it, and argue after the following Manner, Say I these Things as a Man,

1. Cor. ix.
V. 8.

or says not the Law the same also? For 'tis written in the Law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the Mouth of the Ox, that treads out the Corn. Do's God take Care for Oxen? Or, says he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written.

And how confus'd is Celsus's Discourse, and how do's it want, ev'n a plausible Appearance, to recommend it to the World, when he talks after the following Manner. Some of you, says he, have forsak'n our Excellent Religion, under a Pretence of giving Allegorical, and Mystical Explications of the Law. Others of you are great Admirers of a spiritual Sence, as you are pleas'd to term it, and yet are diligent Observers of those outward Ceremonies, which make so considerable a Part of the Religion which we embrace. There remain some others, who adhere to the literal Sence of Scripture; thinking, that Abundance of spiritual Matter is wrapt up, in the very Letter of the Law, and profess, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Person, who was foretold by the Jewish Prophets, and at the same Time, observe the Precepts of Moses, and the Traditions of their Ancestors.

But how cou'd it be expected, that Celsus's Jew, shou'd give us a true, and clear Account of Matters of this Nature, since in the Sequel of his Discourse,

course, he mentions several very great, and notorious Heresies. And there were some *Jews*, who turn'd their Backs, as he says, upon the Creator of the Universe, and didn't know, that the believing *Israelites* did live, in the strict Observance of the Law of their Fathers.

For his Design was not, to act the Part of an impartial Enquirer into Truth, who readily submits to the Evidence, which it carries with it, but to vent his Malice, and right, or wrong, to make a Vigorous Opposition to the Christian Religion, and as he vainly thought, to expose it to the highest Contempt imaginable.

CHAP. IV.

THE *Jew* continues his Discourse, 'Twas but y^e other Day, says he, that we severely punish'd the Person, who led you aside, like a Company of silly Sheep, and by Consequence, 'twas very lately, and on a sudden, that you renounc'd the Law of your Fathers.

But

Origen against Celsus. 15

But to this I have already return'd a sufficient Answer. What he adds, I confess, carries with it a much greater Force, *With what Face, says he, or Colour of Reason, can you despise those Sacred Rites, which not long agoe, you held in very great Esteem, and especially, when the Law of Moses, is the Foundation, on which, the Doctrine of your Jesus is built, as you your selves acknowledge?*

That the Christian Religion, is founded on the *Jewish* Law, and Prophets, as well as upon *Christ*, and his Apostles, is, what, I readily confess. But we must also consider, that they naturally lead us to the *Mystery, which was hid from Ages, but is now made manifest,* Eph. iii.
V. 9. by the Appearance of our Blessed Saviour.

And we don't despise the Law, because we have a clearer Revelation; but instead of that, have the greater Veneration for it, and endeavour to shew, what Depths of Divine Wisdom there are, ev'n in the Legal Dispensation, which the *Jews* themselves know little, or nothing of. And why shou'd we think it strange, that the Gospel shou'd be founded on the Law of *Moses*, when our Saviour speaking to those, that refus'd to believe in him, has the following Words, *Had ye believ'd Moses, ye* John v.
vow'd V. 46.

16 Origen against Celsus.

John. v. *wou'd have believ'd me, for he wrote of*
 V. 46. *me ; but if ye believe not his Writings,*
how shall ye believe my Words ? And
 the Evangelist St. Mark begins his Gos-
 pel thus, *The Beginning of the Gospel of*
 Mark i. *Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as 'tis writ-*
 V. i. *ten in the Prophets, Behold, I send thy*
Messenger before thy Face, which shall pre-
pare thy Way before thee ; intimating to
 us, that the Gospel is founded on the
 Scriptures of the Old Testament it self.
 I can't conceive therefore, what Celsus's
 Jew proposes to himself, when he says,
If any Person has foretold, that the Son
of God, was to come into the World, he
was one of our own Prophets, and inspir'd
by that God, in whom we believe.

And I wou'd fain know , how it
 tends, in the least, to the Prejudice of
 the Christian Religion, that John the
 Baptist, who was the Fore-runner of
 our Saviour, was a Jew. For it don't
 follow, that because he was so, there-
 fore all who embrace the Christian Re-
 ligion, whether Jews, or Gentiles, must
 observe the Letter of the Jewish Law.

CHAP. V.

THEN the pretended Jew tells us,
*That our Saviour was punish'd by
 his own Country-men, according to the De-
 merit of his horrid Crimes.* But I think,
 I have said enough already, in An-
 swer to so pityful a Cavil, and therefore,
 sha'n't do him the Honour, to imi-
 tate him, in his frequent, and needless
 Repetitions.

Then he laughs at the Doctrine
 of the Resurrection, and of a Future
 Judgment, at which the Righteous
 will be rewarded, and the Wicked
 punish'd; I say, he laughs at it, as
 being, in his Opinion, most highly ridi-
 culous. And he says, *That the Christians
 say nothing, ev'n on these important Sub-
 jects, as they are pleas'd to call 'em, but
 what was said long before; imagining,
 that this is an effectual Argument, to
 overthrow the whole Superstructure of
 Christianity.*

To this I answer, that our Blessed Saviour, perceiving how little Conformity there was, between the Lives of the *Jews*, and the Doctrines, ev'n of their own Celebrated Prophets, thought fit to teach 'em, by Parables, *that the Kingdom of God shou'd be*
 Mat. xxi. *tak'n from 'em, and giv'n to the Gentiles.*
 V. 41.

And we see this Prophecy, most evidently, and remarkably fulfill'd, in the Age, in which we live. For the present *Jews*, not enjoying the Benefit, of that supernatural Light, which is highly necessary, to the right Understanding of the Scriptures, abound, to their great Shame, with extravagant, and innumerable Fancies: Whereas the Christians are happily led, into the Spiritual Knowledge of the Truth, which alone is able, at once, to enlighten, and elevate the Mind, and don't live after the Manner of the *Jews*, as Members, of an Earthly Republick, but like worthy, and honourable Citizens of that Heavenly *Jerusalem*, of which their Pompous Worship, and external Grandeur, is a very imperfect Emblem.

This is evident, in as much as they penetrate, into the deep Mysteries of the Law, and are able, to give a rational, and intelligible Explication of 'em, to any Persons, who may modestly desire it.

And

Origen against Celsus.

19

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And suppose I shou'd grant, that our Saviour himself went so far, as to observe the various Ceremonies, relating to the *Jewish* Sacrifices, this I think, wou'd be no solid Argument, against our believing, that he was the SON of GOD.

He is the SON of that *ADORABLE MAJESTY*, who gave the Law, and from whom the Prophets did receive their Commission, and we, who are Christians, and Members of the *True Catholick Church*, don't wilfully transgress the Law, but rejecting the Fables of the *Jews*, employ our Time, and Strength, in searching into the Spiritual, and Mystical Sence, which we think, the Law, and the Prophets do admit of. For 'tis plain, that they themselves wou'dn't have us rest, in the litteral, and most obvious Sence of the Words, that are made use of, in the important Messages, they deliver from Time to Time, since 'tis their common Practice, to usher in their Prophecies, with some such Introduction as this, *I will open my Mouth in a Parable: I will utter dark Sayings of Old*; and when they speak of the Commands of the Law, as being obscure, and impossible to be rightly understood, without Divine Assistance; they put up this earnest Petition

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tion to Almighty God, *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things, out of thy Law.*

Pl. cxix.
V. 18.

CHAP. VI.

7

AND by the Way, since I am speaking of the Manner of Expression, which the Prophets us'd, I may safely challenge any Person, to instance in any Words, of our Blessed Saviour, that were vain, or ev'n seem'd to have the least Tincture of Pride, and Ostentation. And how can he be accus'd of Haughtiness, and Arrogance, who had abundant Reason, to use the following Words, *Learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of Heart, and ye shall find Rest to your Souls?*

Mat. xi.
V. 29.

He, I say, who after he had sup'd with his Disciples, laid aside his Garments, and took a Towel, and girded himself, and pour'd Water into a Bas-son, and wash'd their Feet, and reprov'd one of the Company, who wou'dn't suffer him to do it, and said, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no Part with me.* He who said to his Disci-
ples,

John xlii.
V. 8.

ples, *I am among you, as he that serves*: Luk. xxi
V. 27
To proceed, let any one shew, if he can, that our Saviour did ever advance any single Position, that was false, and let him explain the Nature of a great, or small Untruth, if his Inclination prompts him, to prove him a notorious Liar, tho' to speak properly, I think, there are no Degrees of False-hood, and on the contrary, any true Proposition is as much a Truth, as the most important Article of the Christian Faith. But why shou'd I talk as I do? Let any one, and particularly, the pretended *Jew* whom *Celsus* personates, make it appear to the World, by solid Reason, if he can, that our Blessed Saviour was ever guilty of the least Impiety.

Was it a Crime, to abolish the Circumcision of the Flesh, the Ceremonial Distinction of Meats, and the carnal Observance of Feasts, New-Moons, and Sabbaths, that his sincere Followers might have their Minds gradually rais'd, to the spiritual, and full Sence of the Law, which alone is worthy of the Infinite Purity, and great Design of the Supream Majesty, who gave it, tho' 'tisn't in the least incongruous, that a Minister, and ev'n an Apostle, shou'd still be a *Jew* to the *Jews*, that he might gain the *Jews* being

being under the Law, as it were, to gain them who were under the Law?

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C H A P. VII.

THE Jew adds, that *Abundance of Persons, besides our Saviour, have led such aside, as tamely suffer themselves to be deceiv'd, and are ev'n fond of Delusion.*

I answer, let him instance in any one Person, if he can, who ever gave such useful Precepts to the World, as our Blessed Saviour has left upon Record, and taught 'em a Doctrine, which had as great a Virtue, to reform the Manners of Men, as that which accompany'd the .successful Preaching of the Gospel.

Then he says, the Christians find *Fault with the Jews, for not believing, that Christ was God.*

But this I have already answer'd, and shew'd, in what Respects, we own our Saviour to be GOD, and in what Sence, we believe he was a *Real Man.*

C H A P.

CHAP. VIII.

CELSUS's Jew adds the following Words, *How can any one imagine, that we, who all along declar'd to the World, that God wou'd send a Person, to punish the disobedient, and rebellious, shou'd treat him so basely, when he came, in Compliance with the Will of God, and to accomplish such great Designs. But 'tis hardly worth my while, to return an Answer, to so ridiculous a Question.*

For 'tis just as if a Person shou'd say, how is it possible, that I, who always preach'd up the Doctrine of Temperance, shou'd be guilty of Debauchery, or, that I, who in Discourse, did always vindicate the injur'd Rights of Justice, shou'd ever be guilty, of violating its Sacred Rules? And as nothing is more common, than for Persons to talk, in the Praise of Virtue, and yet be openly guilty, of the most scandalous Vices: So the *Jews*, who make the Prophetick Oracles the Matter of their continual Boast, do yet shut their Eyes, against the
Q 4 glorious

glorious Light, of those Scripture-Prophecies, which are evidently accomplish'd, in the Person of our Blessed Saviour. And if I may ascribe their Blindness, to some other Cause, besides the wretched Degeneracy of Humane Nature, which they plainly discover'd, I may safely say, that 'twas directly foretold, by the very Prophets they so much admire.

For *Isaiah* says expressly, *Hear ye indeed but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not, make the Heart of this People fat.* Now let any Person acquaint me, what it is, that the Prophet intends, by these, and the like Expressions. 'Tis plain, they saw our Saviour, but wilfully shut their Eyes, against the piercing Rays of the SUN of *RIGHTEOUSNESS*, and heard him discourse to 'em, but cou'dn't comprehend, that his humane Nature was the living Temple of the Deity, which was going to forsake their Nation, and to engage all its infinite Perfections, in the behalf of the believing *Gentiles*.

And 'tis Matter of Fact, and a Thing very Remarkable, that since the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, the *Jews* have been left by God, and that the Beauty, and Glory of their Religion, is, in a Manner, entirely de-

fuc'd,

fac'd and lost, infomuch that there is scarce one Sign of the Divine Presence among 'em, except the severe Judgments, which do so justly befall their Nation.

They have neither Prophets, nor Miracles, to attest the Truth of their Religion, whereas the Christians, ev'n at this Distance of Time, have a Power of working Miracles, conferr'd upon 'em, some of which are not inferior to those, which were wrought, when our Saviour was on Earth.

CHAP. IX.

THEN Celsus's Jew breaks out into the following Expression, *How can any one imagine, that we shou'd treat a Person so ill, that was foretold by our own Prophets, unless we had a Mind to enhance our Crime, and so to aggravate our most deserved Punishment?*

To this, I answer, that at the final Judgment (which is one of the Articles of the *Christian Faith*) the Jews will be punish'd, in a more dreadful Manner, than the rest of the World,

not

not only for rejecting the Messiah, which was a horrid Crime, but also for their barbarous, and almost unaccountable Carriage, towards the Prince of Peace.

Nay, ev'n at this Day, (so remarkably do's the Vengeance of God pursue 'em!) they are the most miserable People, upon the Face of the whole habitable World. For what Nation is there, besides that of the *Jews*, that is banish'd, from their Metropolis, and deny'd the Liberty, of serving God, according to the Religion of their Fathers, and Ancestors, in their Native Soil? These are some of those grievous Calamities, to which, their own Crimes expos'd 'em (For no History can parallel their Villanies) and especially those horrid Barbarities, which they exercis'd, towards our Blessed Saviour, who came into the World, to save 'em, from Sin, and Hell.

CHAP. X.

9

THE Jew adds, How cou'd we look upon him as GOD, who on the one Hand, did none of those Mighty Things, which he pretended to effect, and on the other, was convicted, and condemn'd to a severe Punishment, was forc'd to abscond, that he might not be taken, running, like a Vagabond, from Place to Place, and yet was at last apprehended, and betray'd, ev'n by one of his most eminent Followers, who of all Persons in the World, one wou'd think, might have had the Grace, to espouse his Master's Cause? Was it in the least suitable to the Majesty, and Wisdom of a GOD, to flee, like a guilty Wretch, and to suffer himself to be apprehended, and forsak'n by his intimate Friends, who esteem'd him their Lord, and Saviour, THE SON OF GOD, AND THE TRUE MESSIAH?

To this I answer, that we are not so ignorant, as to call THE BODY of our Blessed Saviour, which was material, and sensible, by the VENERABLE NAME of GOD. Nay, we don't attribute

bute so much as this, ev'n to the holy and spotless Soul of *JESUS*, with respect to which, he uses the following Words, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, ev'n unto Death.* When we meet with such Words as these, in the Writings of the Prophets, *Behold I am the Lord, the God of all Flesh:* Or, Those Words, *Before me there was no God form'd, neither shall there be after me;* the Jews acknowledge, that 'tis the great God himself that speaks, but he makes Use of the Prophets, as Instruments, to communicate his Will to Men, and the Greeks confess, that 'tis a God, that speaks the following Words, by the Mouth of the *Pythian Priestess*,

Herod.
Clio.

*I can the numerous Sands with Ease recount,
Fathom the Sea, and understand a Mute.*

After the same Manner, we say, that it was *GOD*, the *ETERNAL WORD*, the *SON* of the *EVER-BLESSED GOD*, that made Use of the humane Nature of the *HOLT JESUS*, as a proper Instrument, when he spoke the following Words, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I am the Door, I am the Living Bread, that came down from Heaven.* And I might instance in many other Expressions to the same Effect.

We

We blame the *Jews* therefore, and I think not unjustly, for not acknowledging our Saviour to be God, of whom the Prophets do so frequently produce their concurring Testimony, that he is the **POWER** of the **ETERNAL FATHER**.

'Twas to him the Command of God was directed, which we read of, in the Account that *Moses* gives us, of the Creation of the World, *Let there be Light*, Gen. i. V. 3. *let there be a Firmament*, and the like. 'Twas to him he said, *Let us make* bid. V. 6. ibid. 26. *Man, in our Image, after our Likeness*. And the **ETERNAL WORD** did every Thing, according to the Command of God.

And this is not a Conjecture, form'd in our own Fancies, but we build our Faith, in this important Affair, on the concurring Testimony, of those very Prophets, who are readily own'd, and extreamly admir'd by the *Jews* themselves. For we are told expressly, *He commanded, and they were created*. Now, what created Being, how noble soever, cou'd execute the Command of the **ETERNAL FATHER**, with Respect to the Creation of the World, who, but he, who was the **ETERNAL** and **LIVING WORD**?

CHAP. XL

BESIDES 'tis plain, from several Passages in the Gospels, that he, who spake those Words, by the Mouth of the Blessed Jesus, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; was not circumscrib'd, within the narrow Limits of his Humane Nature.

John the Baptist foretelling, that in a short Time, the Son of GOD shou'd make his Appearance in the World, speaks of him, as a Person, that was Omnipresent. *There stands one among you*, says he, *whom ye know not, he it is, who, coming after me, is before me.*

Now is it probable, or ev'n possible, he shou'd apply these Words, to our Saviour's Body, or his Humane Soul? And our Blessed Lord himself, raising the Minds of his Disciples, to more sublime Thoughts of the SON of GOD, makes use of the following Expression, *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of 'em.*

There's another Promise, that is much

much of the same Import, which he makes to his Disciples, *Lo! I am with you always, ev'n to the End of the World.* Mat. 28. V. 20.

I hope the Reader will not misunderstand me, as if I said any Thing, that might in the least interfere, with that intimate, and glorious Union, that there is, between the Humanity of the incarnate Jesus, and the Mysterious Person of the ETERNAL WORD.

For if St. Paul teaches us, that *He that is join'd to the Lord is one Spirit,* 1. Cor. 6. V. 17. certainly they that understand this Doctrine, will readily allow, that there is a closer, and more Divine Union, between the WORD, and its assum'd Humanity. And our *Blessed Saviour* did abundantly discover, that he was no less than the Power of God, by the frequent, and uncontested Miracles, which he wrought, ev'n in the Presence of the *Jews*, tho' they profess'd, to entertain a most unaccountable Notion, (I can't imagine, for my Part, that it shou'd ever enter into any Man's Mind) that he cast out Devils, by *Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*, and *Celsus*, we know, ascribes 'em to the Power of Magick.

But our Saviour abundantly confuted this Absurd Conceit, by shewing, that the Kingdom of *Satan* was going

going to suffer a most violent Shock, as evidently appears to them, who read the Gospels with any tolerable Share of Judgment.

10 Let *Celsus* shew, if he can, wherein our Saviour fail'd in his great Design, to destroy the Works of the Devil, and bring convincing Proofs of the Truth, or ev'n Probability of what he offers. But this, I'm apt to think, is what he will scarce be able to perform, since the Objections, that he raises against us, are founded, for the most Part, on some Matters of Fact, which are grossly misunderstood by him, or some Passages in the Gospels, which are shamefully misapply'd, or some fabulous Accounts, which are owing to the unhappy, but fruitful Invention of the *Jews*.

CHAP. XII.

BUT because Celsus's Jew affirms, that he was convicted, and condemn'd, after a Legal Process, I desire to know, how this can be prov'd to be true, when 'tis plain, beyond all Contradiction, that his Enemies were very zealous, in suborning false Witnesses against him. Perhaps they wou'd fain make us believe, that our Saviour was convicted, because his Accusers took great Advantage against him, by that innocent, and just Expression of his, *I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days.* Mat. xxv
V. 3. i
'Tis true indeed, he spoke these Words, of the Temple of his Body, but they, not knowing his Design, imagin'd, that they had a Reference to their *Material and Pompous Temple*, for which they plainly discover'd a far greater Veneration, than for that *Glorious, and Adorable Temple*, wherein the *ETERNAL WORD*, the *TRUTH*, and *WISDOM* of *GOD* did *Personally*, tho' Mysteriously reside.

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But

But since Celsus's Jew insults over us, because our Saviour was taken, I grant he was, but this ought to be consider'd, that it wasn't done, without his own Consent.

For when his Time was come, he surrend'red himself, as an easie Prey, into the Hands of his barbarous Enemies, and abundantly made good the Character, which is giv'n him, in the Holy Scripture, and particularly in the following Words, *Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the Sins of the World.* This is no more than what

John i.
V. 28.

Joh. xviii
V. 4, &c

the Evangelist tells us, *Jesus therefore knowing, says he, all Things, that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto 'em, whom seek ye? They answer'd him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus says unto 'em, I am he. And Judas also which betray'd him, stood with 'em. As soon then as he had said unto 'em, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the Ground. Then ask'd he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answer'd, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their Way.* And when one of his Disciples stood by, and smote the Ear of the High-Priest's Servant, he said, *Put up thy Sword into its place. For all they that take the Sword shall perish by the Sword. Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray*

Origen against Celsus.

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pray unto my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels. But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfill'd, that thus it must be?

Now if any Person shou'd be so weak, as to imagine, that these are only Fictions of the Evangelists, have we not Reason, on the contrary, to think, our Adversaries have been grossly guilty of that Practice (with which they charge the Christians) that so they might vent their implacable Malice, against all those, who profess to be the Followers of the *Blessed Jesus*, and to believe, that those Things are most certainly true, which are related by Persons, whose Integrity do's abundantly appear, from the Consideration of the dreadful Calamities, to which they knew their Religion did so manifestly expose 'em?

For we can't conceive, that the Followers of our *Blessed Saviour* shou'd embrace the most shameful, and painful Death, with undaunted Courage, and heroick Constancy, had they been the scandalous Inventors of the History, which they transmitted to Posterity, but on the contrary, we must esteem 'em to be Persons, who were fully persuaded, in their own Minds, of the Truth, and Importance, of what they publish'd to the World; since they

R 2 knew

knew, by Observation, and Experience, that Scorn, and Infamy were the shocking Attendants, and Persecution, and Death almost the natural, and unavoidable Consequence of the glorious Profession, which they made of the Name of Jesus.

CHAP. XIII.

WHAT the pretended Jew says farther, viz. That our Saviour was betray'd by his own Disciples, he might learn from the Evangelists, with this little Difference, that whereas they acquaint us, that he was betray'd by Judas, he chooses to speak in the Plural Number, that his Objection may seem to have the greater Force, but hasn't the Curiosity. I will not say the Conscience, to enquire narrowly, into the Account, which we have of Judas, whose Heart was miserably divided, between his Master, and his Lust, and govern'd at once by extravagant, and very different Passions. For that infamous Traitor gave a Sign to the Persons that came to apprehend

cf. p. 271
(p. 41)

Origen against Celsus.

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head him, *Whosoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast.* So that it seems, he retain'd something of the Respect, which formerly he paid his Master, since other wise he wou'd have betray'd him openly, and without that flattering Ceremony, and most horrid Solemnity. Mat xxvi
V. 48.

We have Reason therefore to believe, that our Saviour's most excellent, and awakening Discourses had made some faint Impression, ev'n upon the Mind of one, who was so unaccountably sway'd by a covetous Disposition, that he had the Impudence to betray his Lord, and would not stop, till he had shamefully compleated the most villanous Design, for the Accomplishment of which, all the Devils in Hell did ever lend their Assistance. Therefore the Evangelist tells us, that

Judas when he saw he was condemn'd, repented himself, and brought again the thirty Pieces of Silver, to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying I have sinn'd, in that I have betray'd the innocent Blood. And they said, What's that to us? See thou to that, and he cast down the Pieces of Silver in the Temple, and departed, and went, and hang'd himself. Mat xxvi
V. 3.

Now if Judas, whose Custom we may suppose it was, to apply to his private Use, the Money that was col-

lected, for the Relief of the Poor, was so far penitent at last, as to return the thirty Pieces of Silver, to the Chief Priests, and Elders; I think, we may rationally conclude, that the Instructions of our *Blessed Saviour* had wrought, in some Measure, on this *most barden'd Wretch*, that he cou'dn't erase 'em, out of his faithful Memory, and sail entirely in his Respect for the *meek, and spotless Jesus*. But those Words, *I have sinn'd in that I have betray'd the innocent Blood*, are a plain, and open Acknowledgment of his horrid Crime, and you may partly judge, what a lively Sense he had, of the great Injustice, and Ingratitude, that appear'd in what he had so lately done, since Life it self was grown a Burthen to him, he felt an *unusual Horror* of Conscience, and was forc'd to arraign, accuse, and condemn himself.

We have here likewise a remarkable, and standing Instance, of the happy Effect, which our Saviour's Instructions had, upon the *vilest Wretch*, that ever breath'd in the common Air, that tho' he added *the Worst of Treasons*, to his Cheating the Poor; yet some Sparks of Ingenuity were remaining, in a Person, who was little better than a *Devil* in an Humane Form.

Indeed

Indeed 'tis possible, after all I have said, that *Celsus's* *Jew* may give no Credit, to the Account, which we have in the Gospels, of the Treachery of *Judas*, and will hearken to that Part alone, that acquaints us, that one of our Saviour's Disciples did betray him, and will take the Liberty, to say more than the Holy Scripture do's affirm, *viz.* That he committed that horrid Crime, with the full Bent of his Will, and without the least Remorse.

But 'tis very unreasonable, that a Person shou'd believe, or disbelieve the Scripture-History, as he is led aside, by the unhappy Biass of his deprav'd Affections.

And our Adversaries themselves, if they have any Shame in 'em, must, I think, in some Measure, be affected, if they will but read the Hundred and Ninth Psalm, which directly, and entirely relates to *Judas*. It begins after the following Manner, *Hold not thy Peace, O God of my Praise. For the Mouth of the Wicked, and the Mouth of the Deceitful are open'd against me.* Psalm. cix.
V. 1.

'Tis prophesy'd there, that *Judas* shou'd be degraded from the Apostolical Function, on the Account of the horrid Crime he shou'd commit, and that another shou'd supply his Place,

which is intimated to us in the following Words, *Let another take his*
 Psal. cix. V. 8. *Office.*

And supposing our Saviour had been betray'd, by one ^{this} Disciple, who was, if it had been possible, more wickedly dispos'd than Judas, and his Master's most sweet, and heav'nly Instructions hadn't made the least secret Impression upon his harden'd Mind, how wou'd this in the least reflect on the Holy Religion, which the Blessed Jesus introduc'd into the World?

What relates to his being apprehended by his Enemies, has been already consider'd, and I have shew'd, that he made a *willing Surrender* of himself, into the Hands of those Blood-thirsty Wretches, to set us a *Bright Example* of Submission to the Will of God, under the *darkest Dispensations* of his wise, and holy Providence.

12

What the Jew adds, I confess, do's seem to me to be very childish, and ridiculous. A good General, says he, who commands a numerous, and well-disciplin'd Army, was never known to be betray'd by his Soldiers. Nay, the Ring-leader of a Company of Highway-Men, tho' the merest Rogue in Nature, and tho' his Followers be the most contemptible, and cursed Crew that ever was in
 the

Origen against Celsus.

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the World; yet needn't fear being betray'd, since they esteem him the fittest Person for the Accomplishment of their base Designs. But as for your Pretended Saviour, he was betray'd by his own Disciples, nor having so great an Interest in 'em, as a good General in his Soldiers, or the Ring-Leader of a Company of Highway-Men in his vile Accomplices.

On the contrary, many Instances might be produc'd from History, of Famous Generals, and Ring-Leaders of Highway-Men, betray'd by those, who were under their Command, ev'n after they had receiv'd from 'em, all the Assurances of their inviolable Fidelity, which they cou'd reasonably desire.

But suppose 'twere otherwise, I appeal to common Sense, whether it cou'd be fasten'd on our Blessed Saviour, as a just Reproach, that he was shamefully betray'd by one, who was engag'd, by all the Sacred Ties of Duty, and Gratitude, to be devoted to his Service, who certainly, if he hadn't been possess'd by the Devil, cou'd never have form'd so cursed a Design, much less have ever brought it to so dishonourable an Execution?

I ask *Celsus*, who pretends to no mean Skill in Philosophy, whether 'twas *Plato's* Fault, that *Aristotle*, after he had been his Pupil, for twenty Years, did publickly declare, that he rejected his Tutor's Notion, of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and esteem'd his Conceptions, as no better than Philosophical Chimera's, and vain Amusements.

I ask him, whether *Plato's* Philosophy lost any of its native Sublimity, and all his Notions were false, the very Moment his Pupil did oppose him; or rather, since *Plato* was plainly in the right, at least in the Opinion of a *Platonist*, whether *Aristotle*, as Learned as he was, didn't discover too much of Malice, and Ingratitude.

Chrysippus also, in several Places in his Writings, do's condemn the Opinions of *Cleanthes*, tho' 'twas owing to him, that in his younger Years, his Mind was season'd, with wholesome, and excellent Instructions.

Besides, *Aristotle* is suppos'd to have study'd Philosophy in the School of *Plato*, for twenty Years, and *Chrysippus* study'd the same excellent Science for many Years, in the School of *Cleanthes*: Whereas *Judas* hadn't continu'd three Years with our Blessed Saviour, when he so shamefully betray'd him.

And

And if we read the Lives of the Philosophers, we shall meet with frequent Instances, that, in some Respects, resemble the *Horrid Treachery* of Judas.

We shall find, that the *Pythagoreans* built Tombs, for such Persons as left the Study of Philosophy, and betook themselves to a different, and less-useful Course of Life.

But I suppose no Person, will be so weak, as to take Occasion from hence, to reflect on the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, or the solid Arguments which his Followers us'd in its Defence.

The Jew adds, that *Having many Things to say, with respect to our Saviour, which are far from being fairly represented by his Disciples, he chose to pass em over in a profound Silence.*

But I ask, what Truths are these, that are misinterpreted by the Evangelists, and which he forbears to mention? Must not this pass for a Rhetorical Flourish, to make us believe, he was furnish'd with a great Stock of Arguments, against our *Blessed Saviour*, when most, if not all, that he cou'd possibly say, if it was true, and material, was borrow'd, from those very Gospels, which sometimes he so much despises.

C H A P. XIV.

THEN *Celsus* finds Fault with our Saviour's Disciples, for saying, *That he foreknew, and foretold all the remarkable Things that ever happen'd to him.*

But we doubt not in the least, but we can easily prove, by an Enumeration of Particulars, (let *Celsus* say what he pleases to the contrary) that our Saviour foretold several Things, that shou'd befall his Disciples, some considerable Time before they came to pass.

What a wonderful Instance of this, Mat. x. V. 18. is that which St. *Mathew* gives, *Ye shall be brought before Governors, and Kings for my sake, for a Testimony against them, and the Gentiles.* I might quote many other Places, where our Saviour do's expressly foretell the grievous Persecutions, that shou'd be the too common Lot of Christians.

Now what Religion is there, in the whole habitable World, that wants the Advantage of a *TOLERATION*,
except

except that which our *Saviour* introduc'd? So that there's no Ground, for that foolish Plea, which our Enemies make Use of, that he saw, what bad Entertainment, false, and corrupt Notions wou'd naturally meet with in the World; and therefore, to raise his Reputation, and promote his Interest, did only foretell those Things, which any Child might have known wou'd befall him.

But if Persons wou'd unavoidably be brought before Governors, and Kings, for holding false, and wicked Notions, one wou'd think that the *Epicureans*, who disbelieve an overruling Providence, shou'd be brought before 'em, as soon as any Persons in the World, or the *Peripateticks*, who think, that the Prayers, which are put up, and the Sacrifices, which are offer'd to the *Gods*, are wholly insignificant, and *little Arts* unworthy to be practic'd by those, who pretend to the Sence, and Learning of Philosophers.

But perhaps our Enemies may object, That the *Samaritanes* are persecuted on the Account of their Religion.

To this I answer, that they are condemn'd to dye, for circumcising themselves, in direct Opposition to the Law, which permits none but *Jews*, to observe this celebrated, and Ancient

Ancient Rite. And we don't find, that the Judge leaves it to their Choice, whether they will obstinately persist, and dye, or renounce their Religion, and so be publicly acquitted, but if they are found to be circumcised, immediately they must suffer Death.

The Christians are the only Persons in the World, who, tho' they are persecuted, according to our Saviour's Prediction, *Ye shall be brought before Governors, and Kings for my sake*, are entreated, to the last Breath they draw, to renounce the *Christian Religion*, and sacrifice to Idols, and so to put themselves directly into a safe, and happy Condition, with respect to their outward Circumstances.

See therefore, with what Authority our Blessed Saviour spoke the following Words, *Whosoever shall confess me, before Men, him will I confess, before my Father, which is in Heav'n, but whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny, before my Father, which is in Heav'n.*

Take Notice, that this was spoken by him, a considerable Time before the Thing, that he speaks of, was true in Fact. Perhaps such a Thought as this, may be ready to dart into your Mind, that he builds Castles in the Air, and what he prophesies don't look at all, as
if

if the Event wou'd be answerable. But if you can exercise a little Patience, you'll say thus to your selves, if our *Blessed Saviour* did readily foretell, that Governours, and Kings, wou'd use their utmost Endeavours, to extirpate the Religion, he introduc'd into the World, and if the Event has fully answer'd his Prediction, certainly we have all imaginable Reason to believe, that he receiv'd such a Power from God, as was necessary, to make his Doctrine obtain, so Universally as it did, and that he knew very well, that all the Difficulties, that lay in the Way to its Reception, shou'd be happily, and easily surmounted, by the help of Miracles. And who, without a *Transport of Holy Admiration*, can set our *Saviour* before his Eyes, expressly foretelling, *That the Gospel of the Kingdom shou'd be preach'd in all the World, for a Witness unto all Nations*; and see the Prediction in due Time fulfill'd, the Gospel being preach'd to the *Greeks*; and *Barbarians*, to the Learned, and Unlearned, and the whole habitable World being brought, as it were, under its honourable, and happy Yoak?

Mat. xxiv
V. 14

Besides let the Pretended Jew, who don't believe, that our *Saviour* foretold those Things, which, we see, did afterwards befall him, I say, let him
confi-

consider, that when the City of *Jerusalem* was in all its *Glory*, and the *Pompous Ceremonies* of the *Jewish Religion* were solemnly perform'd in it, he foretold, that it shou'd be invaded, and ruin'd by the *Romans*.

I suppose, no One will take the Liberty to say, that they who were his Familiar Friends, and constant Hearers did satisfy themselves. with teaching (*Viva Voce*) those Things, which are the Subject-Matter of the Gospels, without leaving behind 'em a History, of the most remarkable Transactions of our *Blessed Saviour*.

St. Luke has the following Words,
 Luke 21. *When ye shall see Jerusalem compass'd with*
 V. 20. *Armies, then know that the Desolation there-*
of is nigh. Now at the Time when these Things were writ, there was no Suspicion of a Siege, or any grievous Calamity, that threaten'd the *Jewish Church, and State*. 'Twas in the Reign of the Emperor *Nero*, that the *Romans* made their first Attack, on this *Once-glorious City*, and it was not tak'n, 'till the Reign of the Emperor *Vespasian*, whose Son *Titus Vespasian* did utterly destroy it.

This was a just, and heavy Judgment of God upon 'em, for killing *James the just*, as *Josephus* wou'd fain have us to believe, whereas in Truth 'twas

'twas owing to the *horrid Crime* they committed, in embruing their cursed Hands in the *bloody Death* of our *Blessed Lord*.

Celsus therefore, might every Jot as well have granted, that our *Saviour* knew what Accidents wou'd befall him, and yet have talk'd with the highest Contempt of his *Divine Pre-science*, as grant, that he was capable of working such Miracles, as he wrought, and at the same Time affirm, that he was a *Notorious* and *Vile Impostor*. And he might with all his Learning have shown, that the *Augurs* and *Auspices* foretold Future Events, by the Flying of Birds, and by the Intrails of Beasts. But he was loth, it seems, to make this Concession, whereas he do's in some sort acknowledge, that our *Saviour* wrought many Miracles, and yet asserts, he did 'em by the Help of *Magick*.

Phlegon was much more ingenuous, who in the 13th and 14th Book of his *Chronicon*, acknowledges, that our *Saviour* foretold Future Events, and says, they exactly answer'd his Prediction, tho' I observe, that he seems sometimes to confound our *Blessed Lord* with the Apostle *Peter*.

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Origen against Celsus.

And as it were, in Spite of Prejudice, he draws this natural Conclusion, "That since the Founder of
 "our Holy Religion, and many of
 "his Followers were able to foretell
 "many future, and remarkable Events
 "at so great a Distance of Time,
 "which exactly answer'd their Predictions, we must suppose, that
 "they were acted by a more than
 "ordinary Power.

15

Then Celsus says, *That our Saviour's Disciples not being able to conceal those Things, which were expos'd to Publick View, thought that the best Game they had to play, was to give out that their Master foresaw, a long Time before, all the Accidents that did afterwards befall him.*

But either he didn't know, or at least seems to be ignorant, that our Blessed Saviour us'd the following Words to his Disciples, *All ye shall be offended because of me this Night; which we know happen'd accordingly, and was no false Prophet, when he said to Peter, Before the Cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice.*

Mat. 26.
V. 31.

Ibid.
V. 34.

Now if they hadn't been Men of undoubted Integrity, but had design'd to impose on our Credulity by false Narrations, they wou'd certainly

Origen against Celsus.

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ly have discover'd so much of *Worldly Policy*, as to have said nothing at all of *Peter's Denying his Blessed Lord*, whose Cause he had so resolutely promis'd to maintain, and never to have mention'd the Offence which ev'n some of the Disciples took, at the mean Condition in which our Saviour condescended, and thought fit to appear; and if these Things, which seem to represent the Followers of our Blessed Lord to a great Disadvantage, were not related in the Gospels, how cou'd *Celsus*, or any other Person, have tak'n Occasion from thence to cast a Reproach on our most Holy Religion?

But they were not unwilling, that latest Posterity shou'd be acquainted with their Failings, since they were well assur'd, that this wou'dn't in the least hinder the happy Progress of the Everlasting Gospel, or give the Reader any just Occasion, to be guilty of the like Irregular Practices.

What *Celsus* adds is ridiculous to the last Degree, *The Disciples got this publish'd*, says he, *to secure the Reputation of their Master, and 'tis as if to prove that a Man is just, I shou'd instance in several Acts of Injustice that he has done, or to prove that he's free*

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from

16

from Passion, I shou'd shew that he has been guilty of Murder; or, to prove that he's immortal, shou'd expose his dead Body to View, and after all, put People off with this frivolous Pretence, that he foresaw whatsoever shou'd befall him.

But here 'tis apparent, that he grossly misapplies the Instances, which he's pleas'd to produce. For there's no Absurdity at all, in supposing that our Blessed Saviour shou'd propose himself to us, as a Bright Example of *Moral Virtue*, and yet teach us, to sacrifice our Lives, and all that's dear to us; for the Sake of the Religion we embrace.

Consider also, that the Death which he suffer'd, is of General, and Universal Advantage, as I think, I have sufficiently prov'd already. And tho' *Celsus* do's fondly imagine, that it makes very much for the Cause which he espouses, that we don't deny, that our Saviour suffer'd in the most notorious, and shameful Manner; yet this is for Want of knowing the **SACRED MYSTERIES**, that are contain'd in the Passion of our **BLESSED LORD**, as *St. Paul* observes, and the several Predictions, which are left upon Record by the *Inspired Prophets*, concerning this difficult, and important Affair.

Besides

Besides he seems not to know, that there was a Celebrated Heretick, who deny'd that the Sufferings of our Saviour were *real*.

This made him say, *You don't pretend, that his bitter Passion was only in Appearance, but, without mincing the Matter, you hold that he suffer'd, in a strict, and proper Sense.*

For our Parts, we think, 'tis a Notorious Heresy, to maintain that our Saviour's Sufferings were only in Appearance, since we must then affirm, as the necessary Consequence of the fore-mention'd false, and dangerous Position, that his Resurrection, as glorious as we suppose it to be, was a meer *Deceptio Visus*. For he that really dyes, if he rises again, must be really ris'n, and on the contrary, he that dy'd but in Appearance, can only seemingly rise.

But because Infidels endeavour, to expose the Doctrine of the Resurrection of our Saviour, to the last Degree of Prophane Contempt, I shall take Occasion to mention here, what *Plato* relates of *Er*, the Son of *Armenius*, who at the End of twelve Days ^{*Plato's Common*} rose out of his Tomb, and told several remarkable Transactions, that to

his certain Knowledge had pass'd in the World of Spirits.

And I might mention the Story, which *Heracitus* tells, of a Woman, who continu'd a considerable Time without any Sign of Life, which I think, do's evidently, and not a little, serve my present Purpose, since 'tis with Infidels I'm now engag'd.

And many pregnant Instances might easily be produc'd from History, of Persons who have appear'd the Day after their Decease.

Is it then any Wonder at all, that one, who in the whole Course of his Life did so many Actions, which nothing short of a Divine Power cou'd possibly enable him to perform, who wrought Miracles, to attest the Truth of his Doctrine, which were so surprising, and so open to the View of his most implacable Adversaries, that *Celsus* himself has not the Face to deny, that they were true in Fact, tho' indeed he ascribes 'em to the Power of Infernal *Demons*, I say, is it any Wonder at all, that so Divine a Person as our Saviour was, shou'd have something that was remarkable in his Death, and that his Holy Soul, having freely, and ev'n chearfully left his Body for a Time, shou'd return to it, as soon as ever it had perform'd

perform'd the entire Duty of a Dis-
united Spirit?

Our Saviour has the following
Words, *No Man takes it from me, speak-
ing of his Life, but I lay it down of* John 10.
my self, I have Power to lay it down, V. 18.
and I have Power to take it up again.

And perhaps the Reason why his
Holy Soul made Haste, to leave his
Body, might be this, that his Legs
might not be broken, as those of the
Thieves were, who were crucify'd by
his Sides.

Then came the Soldiers, and brake John 19.
the Legs of the first, and of the other, V. 32. (539)
*which was crucify'd with him. But when
they came to Jesus, and saw that he was
dead already, they broke not his Legs.*

So that I have answer'd that Ob-
jection of Celsus, how will you per-
swade us, that he cou'd foretell these
Things?

As for that other, *How will you
ever make us believe, that a Dead
Person is immortal?* We say 'twou'd
seem no Wonder at all, if People
wou'd but take us right, that he
that dy'd was not strictly immortal,
but he that rose from the Dead.
Nay, we say, that our Saviour was
not immortal, with respect to his
Humane Nature, before his Body was
separated from his Soul. For no Per-
son

son who is to dye, can properly be said to be immortal, but then he's truly immortal, when he's for ever loos'd from the Bands of Death.

Rom. 6. *Christ being rais'd from the dead, dies*
 V. 9. *no more; Death has no more Dominion over him; whatever some Persons may affirm, who don't understand the Meaning of these mysterious Words.*

17

CHAP. XV.

WHAT Celsus adds, is no less ill-grounded, than what goes before; *What God, says he, or Demon, nay, what Man of Common Sense, will not take the most proper Methods that he can, to avoid the Evils he foresees will befall him, and especially, when he knows he can easily prevent 'em, if he will?*

But Socrates was well-acquainted with the Nature of the Poyson, that was giv'n him, and if he had but follow'd the Advice of Crito, he had escap'd out of Prison, and secur'd his Person, from the great Inconveniences, to which he was expos'd, and yet

yet he chose rather to dye, than to act in the least unbecoming the Character of so Celebrated a Philosopher.

So *Leonidas*, the *Lacedemonian* General knew very well, that he, and his Company shou'd dye at *Thermopyla*, yet preferring his Honour to his frail, and mortal Life, he said, "Come, let us dine like those, who are to eat their Supper with the Dead.

They who will take the Pains, to consult Historians, may find abundance of such Instances as these. What Wonder is it then, that our Blessed Saviour didn't use all possible Endeavours, to avoid those Evils, which he knew wou'd befall him, when a far inferiour Person, I mean the Apostle *Paul*, foreseeing what Things he shou'd suffer at *Jerusalem*, encounter'd the greatest Dangers, and sharply reprov'd the *Cruel Kindness* of those, who with Tears in their Eyes, endeavour'd to prevent him, from the happy Execution of his great Designs.

Nay, many at this very Day, who are not ignorant, to what dreadful Calamities the Profession of Christianity will expose 'em, and that if they wou'd openly renounce it, they shou'd be immediately discharg'd, and have their Goods restor'd; I say, many at this very Day, despise Life with all
its

its native, and gawdy Charms, and embrace Death it self, ev'n approaching to 'em, in the most frightful Shapes.

18

What *Celsus* adds, is as ridiculous as what went before, *If*, says he, *Judas's Treason, and Peter's Denial of his Master were foretold by Christ; one wou'd think, they shou'd for that Reason, have had an Aweful Sense of His Divinity, and thereby have been effectually secur'd from offering such base Affronts, to their suppos'd Rightful Sovereign, and most Liberal Benefactor.*

But here *Celsus*, with all his Wisdom, do's unawares most grossly contradict himself, because if our *Saviour* was *GOD* as well as *Man*, then the Events of Things cou'dn't but exactly agree with what his *Infinite Mind* foresaw concerning 'em, and by consequence, the one must *Unavoidably* betray, and the other by a sad, but *Fatal Necessity* deny him. If Matters cou'd have happen'd otherwise, if *Judas* hadn't betray'd, nor *Peter* deny'd him, being sufficiently forewarn'd of the Folly, and Danger of committing such horrid Crimes, his Veracity might easily have been call'd in Question. For if our *Saviour* foresaw, as we say he did, that *Judas* shou'd

shou'd betray him, he also foresaw that Corruption of his Nature, that that inclin'd him to his Treachery, and if he foresaw, that St Peter wou'd deny him, he also foresaw his Infir- mity, that was the unhappy Cause of his committing so base a Crime, and this was consistent enough with his permitting him, to be surpriz'd into a gross Act of S.n.

And what do's Celsus's Jew propose, I wonder, when he says, *They betray'd, and deny'd him, throwing off all manner of Respect to him, whom they own'd to be their Lord, and Master?* For I have already shewn, that Judas him- self, as vile a Wretch as he was, re- tain'd some respect for our Blessed Saviour, ev'n in that horrid Instant, in which he inhumanely betray'd him. And the like may be said of St. Peter, who, after he had shamefully deny'd him, *went out, and wept bitterly*; as St. Mathew acquaints us.

What the Jew adds is very ridicu- lous, and childish, *If a Person, says he, do's once discover the Snares, that are laid for him, and detect his Ad- versaries, they commonly desist from their malicious Purpose.* For the contrary is most evident, from the Experience of all

all Ages of the World. Then as if he were drawing to a Conclusion, he says, *We mustn't imagine, that these Things came e're the more to pass, because he foretold 'em, but rather infer from what I have said, that he never did foretell 'em. For 'tis absurd to suppose, that either Judas wou'd ever have betray'd, or Peter have deny'd him, had they been forewarn'd, and appriz'd of his Prediction.*

But since I have already overthrown the Principles, on which his Discourse is founded, the Conclusion which he draws, *viz. We mustn't imagine, that these Things came to pass, because he foretold 'em, must fall to the Ground of Course.*

We say the Events happen'd, as Things in their own Nature possible, and since they came to pass, we see the Predictions verify'd. For the Truth or Fallhood of Prophecies is best known by the Event. Therefore what he says, *viz. That they didn't come e're the more to pass, because he foretold 'em, but we must rather infer from what I have said, that he did never foretell 'em. For 'tis absurd to suppose, that either Judas wou'd ever have betray'd, or Peter have deny'd him, had they been forewarn'd, and appriz'd of his Prediction.* This I say, is most apparently

parently false, and his Inferences are not just.

Then he says, that If our Saviour was GOD, and really foretold these Things, as You are apt to imagine, they must necessarily come to pass, so that a GOD is suppos'd to force his Disciples to be wicked, with whom he seemingly express'd so endearing a Familiarity, when on the contrary, he of all Persons shou'd have been highly serviceable to all Mankind, and especially to his intimate Acquaintance, and might have had so much Policy, one wou'd think, as to affect those Persons, who espous'd his Cause. Besides is it usual, for Men to betray their Friends, to whose Table they are welcome, and where they are civilly, and perhaps very plentifully entertain'd? Yet here no less a Person than a GOD is suppos'd to be betray'd. Nay, a GOD (which greatly aggravates the Matter) is suppos'd most grossly to intrench on the sacred Laws of Civility, and common Friendship, and by his Divine Prediction, to make his Disciples themselves turn Traitors, and Cowards.

I shall return an Answer to this long Investive, rather in Compliance with the strict Injunctions, that are laid upon me, than for the sake of any Force, that I discern in the Objection.

Celsus

Origen against Celsus.

X | Celsus entertains a fond Conceit, that whatever is foretold by a GOD, do's therefore come to pass, because it was foretold by him.

X | But here I must beg Leave to differ from him, and am; I confess, of the Opinion, that he who foretells *Future Events*, isn't properly the Cause of their Coming to pass, at the predicted Time, but that on the contrary, he foresees, that Things will happen so or so, whether ever they be foretold or not. And I don't think that his Præscience, ev'n upon the Supposition that he's GOD, do's in the least interfere with the Possibility of Future Events to happen, or not to happen, according to the natural, and regular Course of Things, as if barely on that Account, they must infallibly answer his Prediction.

CHAP. XVI.

HERE I might produce Abundance of pregnant Instances, from the Sacred Scriptures, and from the Histories of the *Greeks* themselves, to shew, that Future Events are not owing to Predictions, but fall out always in such a Way, as perfectly agrees with the Liberty of the Humane Will. And either my Notion of this Matter is just, or what the *Greeks* call ἀεγὼ λόγῳ, will be no Sophism at all, tho' the contrary be very apparent, to any Learned, and Judicious Person. x

To render this Matter as intelligible as may be, I shall instance in the Prophecies concerning *Judas*, which the Sacred Scriptures do furnish us with, and shall produce one remarkable Instance of the Truth of my Assertion, from the History of the *Greeks*, viz. The Answer of the Hea-then Oracle to *Laius*.

By

64 Origen against Celsus.

By the Way, I shall here take it for granted, that the Oracle was true, since I think, I may make the Supposition, without doing the least Prejudice to the Subject, which I have now in Hand. The Author of the Hundred and ninth Psalm, speaking in the Person of our Blessed Saviour, has the following Words, concerning that Traitor Judas, *Hold not thy Peace, O God of my Praise, for the Mouth of the Wicked, and the Mouth of the Deceitful are open'd against me.* And if you take diligent Notice, you'll find, that throughout the Psalm, the Prediction must be understood, in a Sence consistent with the Crime of the Traitor, and his deserving all those heavy Curses, that are there mention'd by the Psalmist.

Psalm. cix. V. 1.
ibid. 16. Let 'em fall upon him, says he, by a Spirit of Prophecy, because he remember'd not to shew Mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy Man, that he might ev'n slay the broken in Heart. 'Tis plain, he might, if he wou'd, have remember'd to shew Mercy, and was not forc'd, to persecute the poor, and needy Man, tho' he misemploy'd that Power, which God Originally gave him, and actually betray'd his Master, and so render'd himself most justly obnoxious to those dreadful Curses,

66 *Origen against Celsus.*

State of Health, whether I use any Remedies or no; and if he has decreed, that I shall not be recover'd from it, whatever Medicines I may take, 'twill infallibly remain upon me, therefore whether he has decreed my Recovery or not, the Endeavours of the Physician are equally, that is to say, entirely useles.

And the Sophism in the Case of *Laius*, is very Comical, and runs after the following Manner, If the Fates have decreed, that I shall have a Son, I shall certainly have him, whether I am ever concern'd with any Woman or no; and if they have decreed, that I shall never have a Son, I shall never have one, whether I live in the Use of Means or no; and therefore whether they have decreed, that I shall have a Son, or have determin'd the contrary, no carnal Copulation will ever have the desired Effect.

But as 'tis highly absurd to refuse Physick, which is the usual, and proper Method, for the Recovery of our Bodily Health: So 'tis no less absurd, to abstain from Carnal Copulation, if a Person be desirous of a Child, since 'tis the ordinary, and proper Method of Humane Generation.

These

These Things I mention, because the profound *Celsus* has the following Words, *If Christ was God, and did really foretell these Things you talk of, they must infallibly come to pass, at the predicted Time.* For I deny, that they must *Necessarily* come to pass, since 'twas possible for 'em to have had a quite contrary Event. But if he only means, that Divine *Præscience* do's, in some sense, necessitate the Event, I readily grant it, and this I think, I may vigorously maintain, and at the same Time assert, that 'twas very possible, that Matters might have happen'd otherwise. But I think, he's far from proving what he boldly asserted, viz. *That on the Supposition of the Divine Præscience of our Saviour, 'twill Naturally follow, that he made his Disciples turn Traitors, and Cowards, and so was justly chargeable with their aggravated Guilt.*

'Tis true, that since the Heart of *Judas* was, as it were, Open, and Transparent to his All-piercing Eyes, our Blessed Lord was fully appriz'd of the Hellish Design, which he had form'd, and plainly perceiv'd, that the Respect which he had for his Master, was not sufficient, to secure him, from the Fatal impression of a covetous Disposition. This made him say those Words, with an Eye to *Judas*, *he that dipperh*
T 2
his

68 Origen against Celsus.

his Hands with me in the Dish, the same shall betray me.

21

Take Notice farther of the Absurdity, and Falshood, of what Celsus says, 'Tis *unusual*, says he, for Persons to betray their Friends, to whose Table they are welcome, yet here even a God is suppos'd to be betray'd.

On the contrary, 'tis too well known, that Persons, who have been engag'd, by the most Sacred, and endearing Tyes, have often and most shamefully betray'd their intimate Friends, and liberal Benefactors.

The Histories both of the *Greeks*, and *Barbarians* do furnish us with abundant Instances of the fore-mention'd Practice.

This is what the famous Poet, who dwelt at *Paros*, and is so much admir'd for his Iambick verses, reproaches *Lycambe* with. For speaking of his intrenching on the Laws of civil conversation, he says,

Archilochus. *Thou hast dissolv'd the Sacred Band of Friendship, and art Notoriously guilty of the basest Treachery.*

But for the fuller Confirmation of my Argument, I shall refer the Reader to them, who have apply'd their Minds, to the Study of History, both Sacred, and Prophane.

Then

Origen against Celsus.

69

22

Then *Celsus*, as if he had undeniable Arguments, for what he offers, has the following Words, *Nay a GOD (which highly aggravates the Matter) is suppos'd, to intrench upon the Rules of Civility, and common Friendship, and to make his Disciples turn Traitors, and Cowards.*

But this is more than he can ever prove, unless we must allow the Consequence, which he draws, to be Natural, and just, which I am sure is so very weak, that any Child almost wou'd see thro' it, and be ready to expose it.

CHAP. XVII.

23

THEN says *Celsus*, If your Saviour suffer'd freely, in Obedience to his Heavenly Father, 'tis plain, that since you say that he was GOD, and that his Sufferings were entirely voluntary, you must acknowledge, 'twas impossible, that in the midst of his suppos'd Agonies, he shou'd have had so quick a Sense of Pain.

T 3

But

But here, tho' he don't perceive it, his Words imply a plain, and very gross Contradiction. For he will not deny, that our Saviour suffer'd freely, in Obedience to his Father, and then certainly he must feel some Pain, which is inseparable from the Notion that we have of Suffering; since 'tis very ungrateful to Flesh and Blood, as he can't but know, and is not easily reconcil'd, ev'n to the calm Dictates of impartial Reason. And if he thinks that all Sence of Pain is immediately excluded, where there is a partial, or ev'n an entire Consent of the Humane Will, why do's he acknowledge that our Saviour ever suffer'd? In Truth he hadn't represent'd us *in all Things, Sin only excepted*, had he assum'd the Humane Nature, without those many Infirmities, and Miseries, which are its common, and almost inseparable Attendants.

So that after his *Voluntary Incarnation*, he was under some Sort of Necessity to suffer, and in some Respects, the Calamities to which he was expos'd, were occasion'd by the Malice, and unwearied Endeavours of his cruel Enemies.

And

And. indeed, as I have already shown, if he hadn't giv'n his Consent, it had been impossible, that One who was GOD as well as Man shou'd suffer, but he willingly, and ev'n chearfully embrac'd the most painful, and shameful Death, from a deep, and most affecting Sense of the vast Advantage, that wou'd redound from it, to a degenerate World.

Then *Celsus* granting what he wou'd seem to deny, has the following Words, *Pray why do's he make such horrid Complaints, and so earnestly desire, that his Sufferings may be prevented? For he says, Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.*

But here *Celsus* do's plainly, and not a little discover his impotent Malice, against the Blessed Founder of our most Holy Religion. For instead of admiring the remarkable Integrity, which appears in the Writings of the Evangelists, (who might, if they had pleas'd, have omitted this Passage, which he thinks do's make so much for the Interest he espouses, but were induc'd by several very urgent Motives, to relate it) I say instead of admiring the

the remarkable Integrity, which appears in the Writings of the Evangelists, he takes their Words in a Sence, in which they never understood 'em, and adds some Things, that are owing to his own Invention, and takes no Notice of what immediately follows, from whence he might have learn'd, how submissive our Saviour was, to the All-disposing Will of his ETERNAL FATHER. *Nevertheless*, says he, *not as I will, but as thou wilt.* And Celsus seems to have never read those other Words, (which plainly shew, how submissive a Temper our Blessed Lord discover'd, under all the grievous Calamities, which his Father was pleas'd to bring upon him,) I mean those Words of St. Mathew, *Mat. 26, Nevertheless if this Cup cannot pass V. 42. from me, not my Will, but thine be done.*

Here Celsus acts the Part of those, who horribly pervert the Scriptures, and are not asham'd, to do it in the most open Manner.

Our Adversaries frequently take Notice of those Words, *I kill*, and *Deut. 32, reproach us with 'em, but they will- V. 29. fully overlook the following Words, I make alive*, which Passage of Scripture

ture plainly intimates to us, that tho' God do's destroy all them, who live in a Course of Rebellion against him, and are horrid Plagues to their Native Country; yet at length he will make 'em Partakers of a Spiritual, and Glorious Life, such a one as will make 'em trample upon this lower, and perishing World, with the greatest Disdain imaginable.

They take Notice of those Words, *I will smite him*, but the following Isa. 57, Words, *I will heal him*, are wholly V. 17. disregarded.

Here God is represented to us, as acting the Part of a most Skilful Physician, who makes grievous, and often deep Incisions, into the Flesh of his Patients, not with a Design to do it any Prejudice, or put 'em to any needlets Pain, but to remove the Cause of their Bodily Indisposition, and that which keeps them in a low, and languishing Condition.

They take Notice of those Words, *He makes sore*, but those Words, *and binds up*, are not mention'd by 'em.

So Celsus dwells on those Words of our Saviour, *Father, If it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*; But don't mention the least Syllable of the following Words, which plainly discover the entire Resignation of our Blessed

Blessed Lord to his Father's, Commanding, and all-disposing Will.

Here a large Field of Discourse presents it self, which wou'd be of considerable Service, to those, whom St. Paul calls perfect, *We preach Wisdom*, says he, *to them that are perfect.*

But this I shall reserve to a more convenient Season, and a more proper Place, and only perhaps just touch upon it, as I pass along.

I have already, and I think more than once observ'd, that sometimes our Saviour's Expressions must be understood of the Person of the $\alpha\gamma\theta$, the first born of the Creation, as for Instance, when he says, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, and sometimes must be restrain'd to his Humane Nature, as when he says, *Ye seek to kill me, a Man that has told you the Truth, which I have heard of God.*

So in the Case which is now before us, we must understand him speaking as a Man, discovering at once the Weakness of the Flesh, and the Willingness of the Spirit, the former in those Words, *Father if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*, and the latter in those Words, *Ne-*
ver-

vertheless not my Will but thine be done. And 'tis observable, that he begins with those Words, which are a plain Indication of the Weakness of the Flesh, and concludes with those, which discover the Willingness of the Spirit, and the latter are oftneſt repeated by him.

Besides, 'tis worthy of our Notice, that he don't *absolutely* pray, *Let this Cup pass from me*, but expresses a most profound Submission to his Father's Will, in the following Words, *If it be possible*.

I am not insensible, I confess, that some Interpret those Words after the following Manner, that our Saviour foreseeing what Calamities wou'd befall the City of *Jerusalem*, and not only so but the whole Nation of the *Jews*, on the Account of that unjust and barbarous Treatment he shou'd meet with at their Hands, had such a tender Compassion, for this sinful, and miserable People, that he desir'd to be excus'd from Suffering, that he might prevent 'em, from being forsak'n of God, and expos'd to those threatning Calamities, which he had in View.

" And then 'tis as if he had said,
" since the *Jews*, upon my Suffering,
" will be sadly left by that God, who
once

" once took 'em into his special Pro-
 " tection, and put 'em under so happy
 " a Government, as that of a *Theocracy*,
 " I desire, if it be possible, that this
 " Cup may escape me. " Besides if our
 Saviour's Sufferings put him to no
 Pain at all, as *Celsus* wou'd fain have
 us to believe, it was impossible they
 shou'd, upon our own Hypothesis; I
 shou'd be glad to know, how he
 cou'd set his Followers a bright Ex-
 ample, of Patience under the most
 grievous Sufferings, for the Sake of
 their most Holy Religion.

CHAP. XVIII.

THEN *Celsus's* Jew accuses our
 Saviour's Disciples of Imposture,
You impose on us, says he, *with a*
Company of Old Wives Fables, and
han't the Sence, to give 'em the least
Colour of Reason, to recommend 'em to
the World.

To this I answer, the Evangelists
 cou'd easily have omitted these Things,
 if they had pleas'd, and then there had
 been

been no Room for this horrid Slander. For how cou'd our Enemies, unless they wou'd invent Fictions, out of their own fruitful Brain, reproach us, with such, and such Expressions of our Saviour, during his most bitter Passion, if the Evangelists had suffer'd 'em, as it were, to sleep in an eternal Silence?

And Celsus wasn't sensible, that 'twas morally impossible for 'em, to allow 'emselves to be tamely deluded, in the Affair of the History of our Blessed Saviour, so as to be prevail'd with, to look upon him to be no less than a God, and the very Person that was so frequently, and so expressly Foretold by the Jewish Prophets, and at the same Time be convinc'd in their Consciences, that all that they writ concerning him (at least what seem'd to favour him) was made up of Fictions, that were entirely owing to their fruitful, but unhappy Invention.

But 'tis plain, that either they were Men of Integrity, and publish'd nothing, but what they firmly believ'd was true, or else their Gospels are fill'd with trifling Fictions of their own, and by Consequence, they cou'dn't possibly be perswaded in their Minds, that our Saviour was a GOD.

Then

Then Celsus's *Jew* asserts, That ev'n some of the *Christians*, (like Men that are intoxicated by the Fumes of Wine, and don't mind at all what they say, or do) have alter'd the Original Text of the Gospels, so that they may admit of various, and almost infinite Readings. And this, I suppose, they did out of Humane Policy, that when we press 'em home with an Argument, they might have the larger Scope, for their Pitiful Evasions.

But for my Part, I confess, I know no Changes, that the Original Text of the Gospels has ever undergone, unless by Means of the Followers of *Marcion*, *Valentinus* and *Lucian*. Besides 'tisn't fair at all, to charge such a Thing as this upon the Christian Religion, as a Crime, and unworthy of its pretended Purity, but those Persons who were concern'd in the Fact, ought by all the Laws of Justice to answer for it.

And as 'tis no solid, tho' a plausible, and popular Argument, against the Heathen Philosophy, that *Sophists*, *Epicureans*, and *Peripateticks* have us'd their utmost Endeavours, to delude the World, with their false, and dangerous Opinions: So 'tis no convincing

cing Argument against the Truth of the Christian Religion, that some Persons have had the horrid Impudence to corrupt the Gospels themselves, and so have giv'n an unhappy Rise to numerous, and most impious Heresies.

CHAP. XIX.

THEN *Celsus's Jew* finds Fault with the Christians again, for misapplying, as he fondly imagines, the Scripture-Prophecies to our Blessed Saviour. But I think, I have spoke sufficiently to this Point already.

Besides, if the Conviction of his Reader was the End which he propos'd to himself, he ought to have giv'n us a Key, for the right understanding of the *Jewish* Prophecies, and might have offer'd, one wou'd think, some solid Reasons, why they can by no Means be fairly accommodated to our *Saviour*, and really he needn't have been so sparing of his Time, and Strength, in examining a Matter of such vast Importance, and especially,
since

since he confidently affirms, that there are Abundance of Persons, to whom the Prophecies might more fitly be apply'd.

But *Celsus*, it seems, isn't sensible at all, that tho' such extravagant Discourse as this might become one, who is an utter Stranger to the Prophetick Oracles ; yet 'tis very improper, to come from the Mouth of any rational, and sober Jew.

Indeed, a Person of the fore-mention'd Character, will do what lyes in his Power, to evade the Interpretations of Scripture, which we Christians give, but he'll never grant what *Celsus* says, viz. *That there are Abundance of Persons, to whom the Prophecies may more fitly be apply'd, than to our Blessed Saviour.*

I have already observ'd, that the Prophets speak of a twofold Coming of the Messiah, so that 'tis needless for me, to answer the pretended Jew, when he says, *The Prophets represent the Messiah, as a mighty Prince, and Sovereign of the Universe.*

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT he adds, that God never design'd to bring so great a Blague upon the World, as the Christian Religion, do's strongly favour of the Malice of an inveterate Jew, who supplies his Want of Reason, by a vast Stock of Impudence, that he has always by him. But I defy Celsus, and all the Men in the World, to prove, that a Doctrine, introduc'd by one, who reclaim'd so many Persons, from the most scandalous Vices, and effectually engag'd 'em, to enter upon a virtuous Courte of Life, did deserve so scornful a Title, as that which the Jew bestows upon our Holy Religion. Celsus adds with equal Inadvertency, No one, says he, but a Mad Man, would take your Saviour to be God, or the Son of God, who instead of carrying the aweful Stamp of Divinity, bore the Marks of Infamy and Disgrace, and especially since this Doctrine is en-
V tirely

tirely built on some forc'd, and ev'n ridiculous Interpretations of Scripture.

But he ought to produce some Instances of these forc'd Interpretations, which he talks of, and these Marks of Infamy (as he thinks) which do so much disgust him, and let us see, what it is, that he has to offer against us, that so the Christians might return him a satisfactory, or at least a sufficient Answer, if they thought the Matter did require it.

He says, *That as the Sun, enlightning every Thing by its piercing Rays, do's immediately discover it self to us, by the glorious Light, which it transmits, over the whole Sphere by turns: So your pretended Saviour, had he been God, or the Son of God, wou'd have resembled that glorious Luminary.*

This we say, believe, know, and can prove, he did. For when he came into the World, or which is the same Thing, when the Sun of Righteousness did but begin to shine, and its dazling Rays were intercepted, by a dark, and sullen Cloud, Justice seem'd to regain its native Seat, the Neighing of Horses, the Clangor of Trumpets, the Clashing of Arms, and the piercing

the piercing Groans of Sick, and Wounded Persons were heard no more; but a wonderful, and happy Calm succeeded the late dismal Confusions. The All-wise GOD to order'd Matters, that he prepar'd the Way, for the Success of the Gospel, by subjecting entire Nations to the *Roman Empire*, that so our Saviour's Apostles might not be hinder'd, as otherwise they might have been, in observing the Orders, which their Blessed Lord had giv'n 'em, to teach all Nations. For how wou'd this have been practicable, (I wo'n't say easy to be done) if People of different Countries had liv'd under Princes of their own, had wanted a mutual, and fair Correspondence, and had not liv'd under the Jurisdiction of the *Roman Emperors*.

'Tis very well known, that our Saviour was born, in the Reign of the Emperor *Augustus*, who brought the greatest Part of the World under the *Roman* Yoak, and made Mankind, almost, as it were, one Body Politick.

This manifestly, and greatly conduc'd to the Spreading of the Gospel, not only, as it laid a Foundation for a Freedom of Commerce, but also as it happily prevented those dread-

ful Wars, which, we have Reason to believe, wou'd unavoidably have happen'd, if all the Nations of the Earth hadn't been united, under one common Empire. For before the Reign of *Augustus*, the *Athenians* wag'd War with the *Peloponnesians*, and many Parallel Instances, if it were needful, might easily be produc'd from History. And the strict, and most peaceful Religion, which the Christians embrace, wou'd never, in all Probability, have been establish'd in the World, as, Blessed be God, it is, if our Saviour hadn't been seasonably born, in a Time of profound, and universal Tranquility.

Then *Celsus* says, That the Christians are guilty of wretched Sophistry, when they have the Confidence to say, that he, whom they affirm, to be the Son of God, was the VERY ETERNAL WORD. And he thinks this is unanswerable.

Because (says he) instead of that Pure, and Holy Word, which we expected they wou'd give us an Account of, they only tell us of a miserable Man, and scandalous Wretch, that ended his Days upon a Cross, which was certainly the most shameful, as well as painful Death,

Death, that he cou'd possibly have suffer'd.

But this Objection has been already answer'd, and I have plainly shew'd, that *The First-born of every Creature* was pleas'd to assume a *Human Body, and Soul*, that at the Creation of the World, God gave a positive, and strict Command, and the Person, who was concern'd in its honourable, and speedy Execution, was no other than *the LIVING, and CO-ETERNAL WORD.*

And since my Business at present is to talk to a pretended *Jem*, I shall quote a Passage out of the *Old Testament*, viz. *He sent HIS WORD*, Psal. 107,
V. 20. *and heal'd 'em, and deliver'd 'em from their Destructions.*

What *Celsus* adds, in the Person of a *Jem*, *That if this was the Word, that was the Son of God, we heartily agree with you*, is more than I ever heard any *Jem* acknowledge, tho' I have frequently convers'd, and disputed, with their most Celebrated Doctors.

I have already prov'd, that our Blessed Saviour was no *Magician*, nor *Vile Impostor*, and I don't think fit, to imitate *Celsus*, in his frequent, and ridiculous Tautologies;

CHAP. XXI.

LET us see now, what he has to say, against the Account we have, of the GENEALOGY of our SAVIOUR.

Here one wou'd think, he might seasonably have mention'd the Disputes, that the Christians themselves have often had, by reason of the seeming Disagreement, that there is between the several Evangelists, in this important Affair. But with all his profound Knowledge of the Mysteries of our Holy Religion, he hadn't so much Policy, it seems, as that wou'd amount to.

He says, *This Genealogy, which, it seems, is orderly trac'd up, to the reputed Parent of Mankind, and according to which your pretended Saviour was of the Honourable Line of the Jewish Kings, was a fine Invention, to procure him greater Kindness, and Respect, from those weak Persons, who wou'd be so credulous, as to take any Notice of him.*

And

And (says he) 'tis a little odd indeed (but the Christians can swallow any Thing) that the Carpenter's Wife was descended, from so Noble a Race, and, which is more unaccountable, that she her self shou'd know nothing of the Matter.

But pray what's this to the Affair in Hand? Suppose she was ignorant, that she came from a Noble Family, what I beseech you, can you infer from thence, to the Prejudice of Christianity? Might it not be true, that she was remotely descended, from the common Parents of Mankind, and more immediately from the Kings of Judah, whether she knew it, or no?

And perhaps Celsus thinks, that all the Ancestors of a Person, who is oppress'd with Poverty, must of Course resemble him in Condition, and that all the Ancestors of a King did infallibly attain to Royal Dignity. But 'twou'd be Loss of Time, to return an Answer, to such ridiculous Discourse as this. For the Age in which our Lot is cast, will furnish us, with innumerable Instances of Persons, who came of a Rich, and Noble Family, and yet by some unhappy Accident, or other, were soon

reduc'd to a much meaper Condition, than that of the Virgin *Mary*, the Mother of our BLESSED LORD, and on the contrary, they whole Outward Circumstances were formerly very inconsiderable, have been advanc'd, by some Sudden, and Remarkable Turn of Providence, to the Highest Pitch of External Grandeur.

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CHAP. XXII.

THEN he asks, in his Cavilling Way, Pray what did your Jesus even do, that was truly Great, and any Way Worthy of a God? Did he baffle his Enemies, and disconcert their most Politick Measures?

To this I answer, that we are told in the Gospels, that the Earth shook, the Rocks were rent, the Graves were open'd, the Vail of the Temple was rent in two, the Sun suffer'd an Eclipse, and the Earth was cover'd with thick Darknes, ev'n such as might be felt. These were some of the

the *Awful Circumstances*, that attended the most bitter *Passion* of our *Blessed Lord*. And I think, *Celsus* wou'd have discover'd much more of an ingenuous Temper, if instead of relying on the Authority of the Evangelists, only when they offer any Thing, that makes, as he thinks, for the Cause, which he espoules, he had either wholly rejected the Gospels, or else wholly admitted 'em, and had but thankfully admir'd the *Amazing Condescension* of the *ETERNAL WORD*, who willingly became *Incarnate*, with this great Design, to recover a *Degenerate World*, from the sad Ruins of their First *Apostacy*.

Another very considerable Circumstance, that makes for the Honour of our *Blessed Saviour* is this, viz. That ev'n at this Distance of Time, His *NAME* has such an Admirable Virtue, that it infallibly, and easily cures the most dangerous Distempers, both of Body, and Mind. And as for the Sympathy, which the Sun, if I may so say, discover'd, when the Sun of Righteousness it self was suffering a more dreadful Eclipse, which happen'd in the Reign of the Emperor *Tiberius*; and as for the stupid Earth, which trembl'd, when the God of Nature

Nature groan'd, and was ready to expire ; We have the concurring Testimony of *Phlegon*, if I mistake not, in the Thirteenth Book of his *Chronicon*.

Then the Jew, thinking to ridicule our Saviour, quotes those Words of *Bacchus* in *Euripides*.

Euripid.
Bacc.

----- when e'er I please
Heaven for my Rescue daigns to interpose.

But here in the first Place, I can't but make this obvious Remark, that the Jews, of all People in the World, are least fond of the Heathen Poets. However for once, we'll suppose our Jew, to differ from all his Country-men, and to express a singular Affection, for the Learning of the *Greeks*. And I ask him, whether, according to the Rules of any Logick, that he ever read, it ev'n seems to follow, that, because our Saviour didn't avoid his Sufferings, he cou'dn't have freed himself from 'em, if he pleas'd.

I think, he ought much rather to believe, what is related to us in the Acts of the Apostles, that an Angel shook off *St. Peter's* Chains, and deliver'd him from Prison, and that *Paul* and
Silas,

Silas, who were put into the Stocks, at *Philippi*, a City of *Macedonia*, escap'd out of Prison by a Miracle, and much more wou'd the Power of God have been engag'd, to preserve our *Saviour*, from the grievous Sufferings, which he underwent, if the Decrees of Heav'n, and the Reason of Things hadn't conspir'd, if I may so say, to render 'em most highly necessary.

For ought I know, *Celsus* wou'd be ready to ridicule those Stories, or perhaps might never take the Pains to read 'em, since in all Probability if he had ever minded 'em at all, he wou'd presently have resolv'd 'em, as he do's our *Saviour's* Miracles, into the Power of Magick.

Then *Celsus* has the following Words, *The Person that condemn'd your Pretended Saviour, didn't endure a Punishment, comparable to that of Pentheus, who was depriv'd of his Senses, and torn to Pieces.*

But he's so horribly ignorant, as not to know, that *Pilate*, consider'd in his Publick Capacity, was not so properly concern'd, in Condemning our *Blessed Saviour*, as the whole Body of the *Jewish* Nation, which,
we

we see, is for that Reason dispers'd, over the whole habitable World, and suffers a far worse Distraction, than ever *Pentheus* did.

But why do's he make no Mention at all of the troublesome Dream, that the Wife of the *Roman* Governor had, insomuch that she said to her Husband, *Have thou nothing to do with that just Man; for I have suffer'd many Things this Day in a Dream, because of him.*

Matxxvii
V. 19.

Then he leaves out those Things, that are evident, and remarkable Proofs of the Divinity of our Saviour's Person, and Commission, and takes Abundance of Pains, to dress up the LORD of GLORY in a Fool's Coat, by the disadvantageous, and ludicrous Relation, which he gives, of the horrid Affronts, that were offer'd him, viz. The Scarlet Robe, that they put upon him, in a Way of Mockery; the Crown of Thorns, that they put upon his Head, and the Reed, that they put into his Hand.

But it may not be amiss, to ask you the following Question, From whence cou'd you learn these Things, but from those very Gospels, which you take the Liberty to reject at Pleasure? And if this be the true State
of

of the Case, how comes it to pass, I beseech you, that such Persons as you are can take Occasion, to reflect upon our Saviour, from those very Passages of Scripture, which, as many others, with great Reason, judge, do leave an Eternal Brand of Infamy on those, who had the horrid Impudence to insult him?

I think, you shou'd rather admire the Remarkable Integrity, which appears, in the Writings of the Evangelists, and be fill'd with a Holy Awe, when you consider the Amazing Condescension of the Blessed Jesus, who seal'd his Doctrine, with his most precious Blood. For we have no Account, that, after the Sentence of Condemnation was pass'd upon him, he made the least Complaint, or ever utter'd a Word, that ev'n seem'd to be unworthy of the Greatest Hero, that the World cou'd ever boast of.

Then Celsus says, One wou'd think, that now, if ever, he had a fair Opportunity, to give full Proof of his pretended Deity, and in the Face, if I may so say, of the whole habitable World, to be reveng'd of the Jews for the base Affronts, which you see were offer'd, both to him, and to his Dearly-belov'd, and Highly-honour'd Father.

But

But here I ask those of the *Greeks*, who believe an *Over-ruling Providence*, and grant that Miracles have been wrought, Pray, why don't the injur'd Deity take that Advantage (as on your *Hypothesis* he might easily do) which is plainly giv'n him, by those innumerable, and great Affronts, which are daily offer'd him, by the bold Assertors of a *Blind Fatality*.

And when they return an Answer to this single Question, all the Arguments, which they bring, may easily be retorted on themselves.

CHAP. XXIII.

THEN says the pretended Jew,
*What! Shall we say, that this
 vile Fellow that was crucify'd y^e other
 Day had*

Hom. II. *Such Blood, as from th' immortal God do's*
 l. 5, v. 340 *(flow?)*

This

This we must suppose to be spoken by him, in his usual Way of Banter, which seems to me to be his peculiar Talent.

But I shall show, that the Evangelists, who relate these Matters, with a becoming Gravity, and prudent Care, have left behind 'em a true, and sufficient Account, of the most considerable Passages, that occur'd, let Celsus say what he pleases, to the contrary. They acquaint us, that the Blood, which flow'd from our Saviour's Body, was not fabulous, like that, which Homer speaks of, but that soon after he expir'd, *One of the Souldiers with a Spear pierc'd his Side, and forthwith there came out Blood, and Water, and he that saw is bare Record, and his Record is true, and he knows that he says true.* John 19, V. 34, 35.

In Dead Bodies, 'tis common for the Blood to stagnate, and we don't use, to see Water trickle down from the Veins; but when our Saviour was dead, Water, and Blood flow'd from his pierced Side, in a præter-natural Way. And if instead of putting an improper, and forc'd Sence, upon some Passages in the Gospels, and thereby seeking all possible Occasion, to reproach our Saviour, and his Followers, one wou'd but diligently

96 *Origen against Celsus.*

gently, and impartially consider the strange Events, which are there related, one might easily perceive, that the Centurion, and they who were set to watch the dead Body of our Saviour, (who had been Eye-Witnesses of the Earth-quake, and many other surprizing Accidents, that happen'd at that Time) were struck with an unusual Terror, and said, *Truly this*
 Mat. 27. *was the SON of GOD.*
 V. 54.

Then our Bigotted Adversary, who only reads the Gospels, with a Design to pick up some Scraps of 'em here and there, which, as he fondly imagines, do make for the Interest, which he espouses, ridicules our Saviour, on the Account of the Gall, and Vinegar, that was giv'n him to drink.

He was so very thirsty, says he, that he greedily drank off the bitter Draught.

In answer to this, I might easily shew, that that Action of our Saviour will admit of an Allegorical Sence, and must by no Means be confin'd to the bare literal Interpretation of the Words. But I choose at present to return a more general Answer, to this vile, and notorious Calumny; *viz.* That this Relation of the Evangelists exactly agrees, with what was fore-told,

told, under the Old - Testament - Dispensation. For in the 69th Psalm, The Messiah is brought in speaking the following Words, *They gave me also Gall for my Meat, and in my Thirst they gave me Vinegar to drink.*

Now let the Jews acquaint us, who it is that the Prophetical Psalmist speaks of, and name any other Person, recorded in any History, whether Sacred, or Prophane, who had Gall, and Vinegar, giv'n him to drink; or, let 'em freely acknowledge, that what is here related was predicted, as what wou'd certainly befall that Person, whom we believe to be the **TRUE MESSIAH**, and then we come upon 'em, and ask 'em this natural Question, how comes it to pass, Gentlemen, that you shou'd be so loth, to see **YOUR OWN PROPHECIES** accomplish'd, for which you have deservedly so profound a Veneration?

And methinks, an impartial Enquirer into Truth shou'd scarce need any other Argument, to convince him, that our *Blessed Saviour* was the Person, who was all along foretold, than this, that in him all the *Jewish Prophecies* concerning the *Messiah* were so exactly fulfill'd.

C H A P. XXIV.

THEN Celsus's Jew addresses himself to us, in the following Words, *Do you really believe (ev'n you who are so apt to swallow any Thing, that is propos'd to you, by some People, how ridiculous soever it may be) I say, do you really believe, that we do ill, in not acknowledging your pretended SAVIOUR to be GOD, and not looking upon him, as one who sacrific'd his Life, for the General Advantage of the Humane Race, with this great Design, among others, to set us a Bright Example of Patience, under the afflicting Hand of Almighty God.*

! To this I answer, that we justly blame 'em, because tho' they were born, in a Land of Light, and educated in the Knowledge of the Law, and the Prophets, which shou'd have been School-Masters, to have brought 'em unto Christ, they can't answer the

the solid Arguments, which we bring against 'em, and yet will obstinately persist in their *wretched Unbelief*, if the Grace of God don't seasonably, and remarkably interpose in their Behalf.

Farther, we have great Cause to blame em', because they will not see that the numerous, and great Advantages, which the Followers of our *Blessed Lord* did most certainly reap, from the *Heavenly Instructions* which he gave 'em, were an undeniable Argument, that he assum'd *Humane Nature*, with a kind, and generous Intention, to promote our *common Interest*, and 'twas not his Design at his first Appearance in the World, immediately to distribute compleat Rewards, and inflict the severest Punishments on Men, according to their good or bad Behaviour, but to have his Doctrine publish'd to the most distant Parts, as the Prophets had most expressly foretold, and to that happy End to accompany the Preaching of the Apostles with an irresistible Power.

Farther, they justly incur our Censure, by refusing to believe his *Miracles*, which so evidently carry'd with 'em the Stamp of a *Divine Authority*, and saying, *That he cast out Devils, by Belzebub, the Prince of Devils.*

Origen against Celsus.

Lastly, We think they render'd themselves highly obnoxious to the just Vengeance of Almighty God, by treating him as a Slave, and a Vagabond, which was an odd Requital of the Kindness, which he show'd 'em, in causing the Gospel to be preach'd, to every City, and Village, throughout the Land of *Ju-
dea*.

For there was nothing mean, or in any Respects unworthy of his Character, in all the *sad Fatigues* which he underwent, but on the contrary, 'twas a great, and highly *Honourable* Action, truly, and every Way worthy of an *incarnate* God, to give wholesome Precepts, with a liberal Hand, to such Persons, as were capable, of receiving Instruction from him.

What *Celsus's* Jew adds, is most notoriously false, *Not being able, says he, during the whole Course of his Life, so much as to prevail with his own Disciples, to adhere to him, he was at last very severely punish'd, as I hope all the World is by this Time sufficiently inform'd.*

But pray what was it, that so greatly excited the Rage, and Envy
of

of the Chief Priests, Elders, and Scribes among the *Jews*, but the Consideration of the vast Numbers of People, that follow'd our *Blessed Saviour*, ev'n into Desarts, some of 'em being strangely charm'd, with the sweet, and Heavenly Expressions, that dropt from his sacred Lips, and others convinc'd by the *Miracles*, which he had wrought, which fill'd the Minds of his most inveterate Enemies, with equal Malice, and Astonishment? And how apparently false are those Words, which follow, *That he cou'dn't prevail with his own Disciples, to adhere to him, but they gave too evident Proofs, of the Frailty of their Nature, by their wretched Cowardize?* For what Malignant Influence soever their irregular Fear might have upon their Minds, which were not yet duely fortify'd, against the violent Shocks, of outward, and approaching Calamities, they were fully satisfy'd in their own Minds, and were ready, *for the most Part*, to profess, that our *Blessed Saviour* was no other, than the TRUE MES-SIAH.

For St. Peter had no sooner deny'd his Lord, but struck with the Horror of his Crime, *He went out, and wept bitterly*, as St. Mathew tells

Mat. 26.
V. 74

us, and those of his Disciples, that we read of, who retain'd a profound Respect for their Lord, and Master, but were a little amaz'd, and for the present, shock'd, by considering the sad Calamities, which beset him, regain'd that *Native Courage*, when he appear'd to 'em, after his *Triumphant Resurrection*. Nay, they not only believ'd, he was the SON OF GOD, but were confirm'd in the *Christian Faith*, and became more Couragious, than ever, under the happy Conduct of the great Captain of their Salvation.

Celsus thinks, as appears, by the Sequel of his Discourse, there was no real Excellency in our Saviour's Doctrine, nor any Regularity, and Strictness, observable in his Morals, sufficient to advance him above other Men, but that, contrary to the Character, which he bore, he ought not to have dy'd at all, or at least there shou'd have been nothing in his Death, that might justly induce us, to lay down our Lives, when Occasion offers, for the Sake of our most Holy Religion. But to me, I confess, this seems to be a Notion, not a little unworthy of the Learning, and good Sence, ev'n of a *Heathen Philosopher*.

On

On the contrary, our Saviour, by dying for Mankind, has set us a Bright Example of Patience, under all the Sufferings, to which the Providence of God may call us, for the Sake of the True Religion, in Opposition to the ungrounded Prejudices, which the Generality of Men are too apt to labour under, who are Naturally ready to pay Divine Adoration, to the most insignificant Trifle, rather than the Supreme, and Truly-Adorable Majesty, and viewing Persons, and Things, in a false, or very imperfect Light, are wretchedly, and frequently mistaken in the Judgment, which they pass upon 'em. For the greatest Instance of the pretended Piety of these Bigots to Idolatry, is to level all their Wit, and Malice, at those Well-meaning, and Truly-religious Persons, who from a deep Sense of their indispensable Duty, have entirely devoted themselves a Holy, and Living Sacrifice, to the Great Creator, and Supream Governor of the Universe.

CHAP. XXV.

THEN *Celsus*, in the Person of the pretended *Jew*, continues his Charge, against our *Blessed Saviour*, in the following Words, *Your Jesus cou'dn't keep himself free from Evil.*

But I think he wou'd do very well, to instance in any *MORAL EVIL*, that might justly be charg'd upon him.

If he means, that our *Saviour* was guilty of some Vice, or other, (which must be his Meaning, or else 'tis plain, that he talks very improperly) 'twill lye upon this vile Caviller, to name any one Vice, if he can, that ever stain'd the Life, and obscur'd the *Bright Character* of the *HOLT JESUS*.

But if his Meaning be no more than this, that our *Blessed Lord* himself was expos'd to many outward, and grievous *CALAMITIES*, such as Poverty, Persecution, the
Trea-

Treachery of wicked Men, and especially the shameful, and painful Death, which he suffer'd on the Cross, then I think, we may, with equal Justice, bring in a severe Charge, against so great a Man as *Socrates*, who, with all his Philosophy, and *Moral Virtue*, cou'dn't avoid falling into innumerable external Dangers. And how many of the *Greek Philosophers* cou'd I easily name, who were not only oppress'd with *extream Poverty*, but made it the Matter of their *deliberate Choice*.

For Proof of this, we may have Recourse, to their own Celebrated Authors.

They tell us, that *Democritus* was so tak'n up, with Nobler Thoughts, that he had no Leisure--Hours, to bestow upon his Farms, that *Crates* gave away the Income of his whole Estate, with the greatest Freedom imaginable, that he might have the better Opportunity, for Philosophical Speculations, and that *Diogenes*, out of his strange Frugality, was contented, to spend his Life in a Tub; and yet no Man, I think, of common Sense, will, for that Reason, entertain hard Thoughts, of so excellent a Person.

Then

Then *Celsus* adds, *That our Saviour was far from being regular, and unblameable.*

But let him give an Instance, if he can, of any one, among the Numerous Followers of our *Saviour*, who ever observ'd him, to do an unworthy Action, or if he refuses to rely on their united Testimony, I think, 'tis fit, he shou'd acquaint us, with the Grounds, on which he builds his unjust, and heavy Charge.

'Tis very unlikely, (to say no more,) that our *Saviour* shou'd be guilty of the least Breach of any Promise, that he ever made, if we consider, how much, and how readily he consulted the true Interest of his Followers, I mean the Welfare of their Precious, and Immortal Souls.

And when we see, that the remarkable, and unlikely Events, which he foretold, at some Distance of Time from their Accomplishment, have exactly answer'd his Prediction, that his Doctrine is publish'd, to all the Nations of the World, and that they, who have embrac'd it, have, meerly on that Account, been brought before Governours, and Kings; we
can't

can't but be fill'd with a *Holy Admiration*, and encourag'd, to have our firm, and entire Dependance, upon his Infinite Wisdom, Irresistible Power, and Universal Goodness.

And sure I am, that *Celsus* himself can't reasonably desire, to have greater Evidence, of the Truth of any Doctrine, than that which our Saviour has giv'n us, of the Truth of the Gospel, unless he be so wretchedly ignorant of the Incarnation of the ETERNAL WORD, as to expect, that the HUMANE NATURE, which was assum'd by him, shou'd not be subject, to the common Calamities, which attend Humane Life, and by Consequence, to imagine, that we shou'd want the Brightest Example, of Submission to the Will of God, that any Mortal ever gave.

The only Reason, if it may be call'd so, that can possibly be assign'd, for such an extravagant Conceit, is this, that *Celsus* esteems PAIN the GREATEST EVIL, and PLEASURE the HIGHEST GOOD.

A H O

And

And here he goes a Strain, beyond most of the Philosophers themselves, I mean, of those that believ'd an *Over-ruling Providence*, and allow *Courage*, and *Constancy*, and the like Endowments, a Place among the MORAL VIRTUES, which are at once so Necessary, and so Ornamental.

And our *Saviour* was so far, from subverting the Foundation of our Faith, by the various, and grievous Calamities, to which he was expos'd, and which in the Event did befall him, that I think, he has tak'n the most effectual Method, to confirm it, if we can but divert our Thoughts, from the shocking Calamities, that attend Humane Life, to the Bright Objects, and Glorious Entertainments of the Future State, in which we shall look, with an Holy Disdain, upon Sin, Satan, and this lower World.

CHAP. XXVI.

THEN Celsus has the following Words, Surely you will not have the Confidence to say, that your JESUS, being unable to work upon the Minds of Men, in the wretched World, in which we live, went down to Hell it self, to see if he cou'dn't make Converts there.

But our Saviour when he was here on Earth, had so many, and such zealous Followers, that, for that Reason, he had abundance of Enemies, and when he was stript, as it were, of his Humane Body, did converse with Naked Spirits, in the Infernal Region, to make Converts of those, that were capable, of being duly wrought on, by his powerful Ministry, and thereby of answering the DEEP DESIGNS, of his ETERNAL, and UNIVERSAL LOVE.

What Celsus's Jew adds is, I think, very ridiculous. If (says he) after
you

you have tamely suffer'd your selves, to be led aside, like a Company of prodigious Fools, you think you need no other Apology, than a few Pityful Arguments, in your own Defence, Pray why mayn't all those Scoundrets, and Villains, (that like your JESUS have been publickly executed, according to the just Demerit of their Crimes) be accounted Persons, who had the Broad-Seal of Heav'n?

But nothing, in my Mind, can be more clear, than the wide Difference, between the Exemplary Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour, and the just Execution of those, who have been condemn'd as Impostors, or punish'd for some scandalous Crime. And sure I am, that no Man can shew, with any Colour of Reason, that a Person can ever be reclaim'd, from the most notorious Crimes, or indeed from any Immorality, by the Help of Magick.

Then the pretended Jew, comparing our Saviour with a Company of High-way Men, says, *That by a Parity of Reason a Person may have the Impudence, to say, that such a High-way Man, instead of being a Person of so infamous a Character, was no less than a GOD, because forsooth he acquainted his cursed Crew before-hand, that he*
shou'd

shou'd shortly suffer all those grievous Calamities, which in the Event did befall him.

To this I answer, in the first Place, that our Believing our *Blessed Saviour* to be the *True Messiah* is not meerly, or chiefly founded, on his Fore-telling the dreadful Sufferings, to which he was expos'd, and which for our sakes he readily underwent.

In the second Place, I acknowledge, that the Holy Scriptures acquaint us, that tho' our *Saviour* was *G O D* as well as *M A N*; yet *He was number'd with the Transgressors*, that *Barabbas*, a Robber, was releas'd, and our *Saviour* crucify'd, and plac'd between two Condemn'd Malefactors. And I grant, that if our *Saviour's* Disciples bore any Resemblance to Thieves, and if 'twas known in the Memory of Man, that Persons of that infamous Character did readily expose themselves to the greatest Contempt, and Scorn, and the worst Treatment, that Humane Wit, and Malice cou'd invent, and if they can rationally be suppos'd, to do all this, from a just Regard to the *Glory of G O D*, and the Holy Precepts of our *BLESSED REDEEMER*; then I confess, *Celsus* wou'd have had some Ground, for his

his bold, and most prophane Comparison.

But our *Saviour*, who laid down his precious Life, as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, and his sincere Disciples, (who, by their unparallel'd Sufferings, bore an Honourable Testimony, to the Truth of his most Excellent Doctrine, and were the only Persons, whose bare Religion ever brought 'em into Trouble) underwent the most violent Persecutions, from their Enemies, without the least Colour of Reason, and contrary to the Known, and Fundamental Laws of Humanity.

CHAP. XXVII.

NOW observe, how *Celsus* renders himself ridiculous, by what he says, of the sincere Followers of our *Blessed Lord*, *During the greatest Part of his Life*, Says he, *they convers'd with him, in a Familiar Manner, and seem'd to listen to the Instructions, which he gave 'em, but withal, were so cunning,*
that,

that, when they saw he was condemn'd to dye, they wou'd neither dye with him, nor for him, and were so far, it seems, from putting in Practice that wholesome Doctrine, which their Master had taught 'em, viz. Cheerfully to encounter the greatest Difficulties, and Dangers, and to be ready ev'n to dye, for the sake of their Religion, that they shamefully deny'd him, and didn't envy any Martyrs, the imaginary Honour of laying down their Lives, for the Cause of Christ.

Here Celsus takes the Hint from the Gospels, and aggravates some Faults of the Disciples, with a Design, no doubt, to expose the Christian Religion to Contempt, not considering they were just enter'd, into the School of Christ, nor mentioning one Syllable of their Recovery, from their grievous Falls, which was so remarkable, that they preach'd the Gospel boldly, and suffer'd abundance of Ill-treatment, at the Hands of the Jews, and had the Courage, to welcome, and ev'n defy Death, in its most horrid Shapes. I perceive, he didn't care at all, to take Notice of what our Saviour foretold to St. Peter, *When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy Hands.* Nor of those Words, *This spake he, signifying by what Death he shou'd glorify God.*

John 21.
V. 18
V. 19.

He says not one Word of St. *James*, the Brother of St. *John*, nor of the latter, and seems to be ignorant, that *Herod* kill'd *John* the Baptist with the Sword, because he bore Testimony to the Truth of Christ. Nor do's he do St. *Peter*, and the rest of the Apostles so much Justice, as to mention their flaming Zeal, in spreading the Gospel of our Saviour, and to give us an

Acts 15, Account, how They departed from the
V. 41. Presence of the Council, rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer Reproach for his Name; wherein they vastly exceeded all that is related, in the Histories of the *Greeks*, concerning the Courage, and Constancy of their justly-admir'd *Philosophers*.

So that we plainly see, that from the very Infancy of Christianity they who embrac'd it, were effectually taught by it, to despise the gaudy Vanities of the present Life, (which the greatest Part of Mankind imagine to be so charming, and agreeable) and to have the sincere Desires of their Souls most vehemently carry'd out, after another Life, which is far more excellent, and in a word, is every way worthy of a G.O.D.

Origen against Celsus.

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I can't conceive, how *Celsus* can be freed from the Charge of willful Imposture, in the following Words, *All that your pretended SAVIOUR* cou'd do, says he, *was only to get ten wicked Mariners, and Publicans, to publish his Doctrine to the World; and 'twas more than he cou'd do, after all his big Presences, to convince ev'n those credulous Animals of its Truth.*

For 'tis plain, ev'n from the open Confession of the *Jews*, that not only ten Persons were overcome, by the Divine Efficacy of his Doctrine, nor a Hundred, nor a Thousand, but at one Time four Thousand, and at another Time a much greater Number, and that he wrought upon 'em; to so great a Degree, that they follow'd him into Desarts, which alone were capable of containing those vast Numbers of Persons, that thro' him did believe in *GOD*, and where they reap'd great Benefit, from his Exemplary Life, and Engaging Conversation.

I confess, the frequent Repetitions; which *Celsus* makes, do almost force me, to be guilty of wretched Tautology; and make me as impertinent as himself.

For if I didn't, in some Measure, (tho' solely against my Will) comply with his way of Writing, perhaps some weak Persons might suspect, that out of wicked Policy I passed by his Objections, being conscious to my self, that I was uttersly incapable, of returning a satisfactory, or ev'n tolerable Answer.

Then says he, *Pray isn't it the most absurd Thing in the World, to suppose, that he, who when he was alive, and us'd all the little Arts he had, cou'd gain no Followers in comparison, or at least none of any Sense, or Rank, shou'd after his Death, by the Ministry of his Apostles, so strangely influence a considerable Part of Mankind, as they are represented by some to do.*

But according to the Rules of strict Reasoning, which he pretends to be, so great a Master of, he shou'd have argu'd thus, if after his Death he furnish'd his Ambassadors, with all necessary Abilities, to work upon the Minds of Men, and did actually, and so wonderfully move all the secret Springs of the Humane Soul; then there's no Question to be made, but that when he was on Earth in Person, he made deep Impressions on the

Origen against Celsus.

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the Minds, ev'n of the greatest Barbarians, partly by his powerful Preaching, and partly by his uncontested Miracles.

CHAP. XXVIII.

BY and By he asks, *Pray what Reason have you to believe, he was the Son of God?* And personating one of us, returns this Answer, in his usual way of Banter, *Because we know, says he, that he laid down his Life, to destroy the Works of the Devil.*

But the Faith of Christians, in an Affair of this Nature, and Importance, is built, I can assure him, on no single Argument, how perswasive soever it may be, but the concurring, and clear Evidence of several Motives, a few of which I have already mention'd.

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And

And I shall have Occasion perhaps, to make Mention of some other Arguments, on this Head, not only in my Answer to Celsus's Book, entituled **A TRUE RELATION**, but also in some other Treatises, if **GOD** shall be pleas'd to afford me that Measure of the Assistance of his Spirit, that will be necessary, to accomplish my Design.

Then, as if we were so weak, as to believe, that our Saviour's *bare Suffering on the Cross*, was sufficient to prove, He was the Son of God, He says, *What if he did really suffer, can't we instance in many others, that suffer'd as well, and as much as he?*

But Celsus, in this Matter, acts the Part of one of the most unfair Enemies, which the Christian Religion has, who, when they read the History, of the Crucifixion of our Saviour, immediately imagine, that we **FONDLY CANONIZE** all Persons, who were ever so unfortunate, as to hang upon a Cross.

This, any one may see, is the common Practice of the Adversary, I have to do with, who, being utterly unable, to resist the clear Evidence,

dence, which the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Saviour*, do carry in 'em, of the Truth of our Holy Religion, has the Face, to misrepresent 'em to the World, as done by meer *Legerdemain*, or rather by the Assistance of the *Devil*.

But this Pityful, and Vile Cavid has been so frequently answer'd, according to my slender Ability, that really it quite tires my Patience, to repeat Things so often, as I see I must.

Then Celsus makes us say, That our Saviour was the SON OF GOD, because he cur'd the lame, and blind, and rais'd a few from the dead, as we Poor Creatures that we are! are ready to imagine.

But that, in Spite of all that he can say, this Consideration of it self is a solid Argument, to prove, he was the SON OF GOD, is plain, from that Famous Prophecy in *Isaiah*, Then the Eyes of the Blind shall be open'd, and the Ears of the deaf shall be unstopp'd, Then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart. Isa. 35, V. 5.

And 'tis highly improbable, to say no more, that the Evangelists shou'd forge the Account, they give

us, of some, rais'd from the dead, because had they been giv'n, to inventing Fictions, meerly to serve a Turn, they wou'd have giv'n us more frequent Instances of that Nature than we meet with, and of the Resurrection of those, who had been longer dead, than those, of whom we read in the Gospels.

But their giving so few Instances of Persons restor'd to Life, seems to me, to be as plain a Proof as can be, that the Evangelists, whatever *Celsus* may say, were Men of *HONEST PRINCIPLES*, and the farthest of all Men in the World, except our *Blessed Saviour*, from being Persons of *INTRIEGUE*.

They instance only in the Daughter of the Ruler of the Synagogue, (whose Case seems foreign to the Purpose, for our *Saviour* says of her, *She is not dead, but sleeps*) in the only Son of a Widow, whom our *Saviour* recover'd, out of tender Compassion to his disconsolate Mother, ordering the Coffin to be stop'd. And Lastly in *Lazarus*, who had continu'd some Days in the Grave, as the Evangelist acquaints us; and I wou'd offer the following Consideration, to the most judicious of our Adversaries, and at this Time more immediately to the

Jew,

Jew, whom Celsus personates, viz. That as in *Elisba's* Time, there were many Lepers, but none of 'em were cur'd, that we read of, except *Naaman* the Syrian; and many Widows in the Days of the Prophet *Elijah*, but he was only sent to the Widow of *Sarepta*, in the Country of *Sidon*, (for she alone was thought worthy of the Miracle he wrought:) so many Persons dy'd, when our *Saviour* was on Earth, but he only rais'd those from the dead, who, in some Sence, had **QUALIFY'D THEMSELVES** for so **SPECIAL A FAVOUR**. And this I am apt to think he did, to typifie something future, and give Mankind convincing Proofs, of the Truth and Excellency of that Doctrine, which he introduc'd into the World,

And I may safely say, that according to the Promise he had made, his Disciples did far stranger Things, than those, which he himself exhibited to the outward Senses of them, who were the happy Spectators of his Miracles.

For the Eyes of the spiritually blind were frequently open'd by 'em, the Ears of those, who once were deaf

deaf to all the awakening Precepts of Virtue, and Religion, were unstopp'd, that so they might receive the Word of God, and the Promise of Eternal Life, and many, who were spiritually lame, were cur'd by the Gospel; in-
somuch that they don't only leap, but ev'n leap as a Stag, which Animal, as *Naturalists* observe, is an Enemy to Serpents, and happily expels their Poison.

They deriv'd such a healing Virtue, from their Heav'nly Physician, that they cou'd immediately tread on those Serpents, and Scorpions, by which they were once most sadly cripp'd, without incurring the least seeming Danger. Nay, they were effectually steel'd, if I may so say, against the strong, and too often fatal Impressions, which Vice, and Immorality are apt to make, upon the Minds of Men, and in a great Measure fortify'd, against the malicious, and vigorous Attempts of United *Demons*.

CHAP. XXIX.

WHEN our Saviour admonish'd
 his Disciples, to avoid those
 designing Wretches, who confidently
 affirm'd, they were the **TRUE**
MESSIAH, and endeavour'd by their
 cursed Enchantments, to draw Men
 after 'em, (for 'twas needless to admo-
 nish 'em, to avoid every trifling, and
 conceited Impostor) he directed his Dis-
 course to 'em after the following Man-
 ner, *If any Man, says he, shall say*
unto you, Lo! here is Christ, or there;
believe it not. For there shall arise
FALSE CHRISTS, and false
 Prophets, and they shall shew great Signs,
 and Wonders; Inasmuch that (if it be
 possible) they shall deceive the very Elect.
Behold, I have told you before. Where-
fore if they shall say unto you, behold he's
in the Desert, go not forth. Behold he's
in the secret Chambers, believe it not.
For as the Lightning comes out of the
East, and shines ev'n unto the West;
 so

so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.

In another Place he has the following Words, *Many will say unto me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess to 'em, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work Iniquity.*

But Celsus, confounding the Miracles of our Saviour, with the Enchantments of Men, breaks out into the following Exclamation, *O the Force of Truth! He himself don't stick to acquaint us, as ev'n your own Writings inform us, that many shall come, and do the same Miracles, that were wrought by him, and on that very score, O monstrous Impudence! He charges 'em with being wicked Men, and notorious, and vile Impostors; and says, That Satan will be the Original Author of their cursed Arts. So that he himself acknowledges, that 'tis so far from bearing the Stamp of a DIVINE AUTHORITY, that 'tis owing to a Dishonourable, and Unhappy Source, and not being able to resist the clear Evidence of Truth, do's, in the very same Breath, condemn their Miracles, and his own.*

own. Now isn't it a most intolerable Thing, that from the very same Actions, he, by all Means, must be denominated a GOD, and Others be branded with the Infamous Title of MAGICIANS?

So that his own Mouth condemns him, and we ha'n't more Reason, to think, that they were Wicked Men, than that he himself was one of the Vilest Persons upon Earth. For he has plainly told us, that Actions of that Nature, were certain Indications of the most Notorious Deceit, and Impiety, and not of a Divine Power, accompanying the Persons, who perform'd 'em.

But here 'tis obvious to observe Celsus's Malicious Misrepresentation of Matters, since our Saviour's Language is vastly different, from what the Pretended Jew wou'd fain have it to be.

Perhaps he might have had some plausible Pretence, for his Prophane Discourse, if our Saviour had admonish'd his Disciples, to avoid all those, who shou'd make their Boast of Miracles, and had insinuated nothing of the unjust Claim, they laid, to the Title of the TRUE MESSIAH.

But

But since we are told, that they gave out, they were the *CHRIST*, (which I think, is a Profession, that Magicians don't commonly make) and since we are told, they shou'd be Persons, of very loose Morals, and shou'd work such Miracles, as were vastly different from those, which were wrought by our Blessed Saviour, the Conduct of the Holy *JESUS* in this very Affair, is so far from carrying the Appearance of the least Imposture, that to me, 'tis a Convincing Argument, that both he, and his Disciples, wrought their Miracles, by the POWER of *GOD*, and that others, who were acted by *Satan*, did only counterfeit the Glorious Actions of *CHRIST*, and his Apostles, and so prevail'd with some deluded Persons, to believe, that their High Pretensions were most just, and reasonable.

The Apostle Paul acquaints us, how
 2 Thef. 2. The Man of Sin, and Son of Perdition,
 V. 3. shou'd be revealed, and exalts himself above all that is called *GOD*, or worshipp'd, so that as *GOD*, he sits in the Temple of God, shewing himself, that he is *GOD*.

And in another Place he says, Now
 1 Cor. V. 6 ye know what with-holds, that he might be reveal'd in his Time. For the Mystery of Iniquity do's already work; only
 he

he who now lets will let, until he be tak'n out of the Way. And then shall that wicked One be reveal'd, whom the Lord shall consume, with the Spirit of his Mouth, and shall destroy with the Brightness of his Coming; ev'n him, whose Coming is after the Working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness, in them that perish.

And he gives the Reason, why God wou'd suffer him, to act his Hellish Part, upon the Stage of the World, viz. Because they receiv'd not the Love of the Truth, that they might be sav'd, that they all might be damn'd, who believ'd not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness.

Now let any one shew, with any Colour of Reason, that the Miracles of our Saviour, and his Disciples, which are related in the Gospels, were done by such WICKED ARTIFICE, as the Apostle speaks of, and it may not be amiss, to read the Prophecy of Daniel concerning ANTICHRIST.

But Celsus represents the Words of our Saviour to a Disadvantage, when he makes him say, That many shou'd come after him, who shou'd do the very same Miracles, with those which he wrought him.

himself, and yet he *Wicked Persons*, and *Notorious Impostors*.

For as there was a **VAST DIFFERENCE**, between the **DIA-BOLICAL POWER**, by which the *Wise Men of the Egyptians* were acted, and the **DIVINE ASSISTANCE**, which *Moses* had, when he wrought his *Miracles*, the Event sufficiently proving, that what the former did, was merely owing to the Force of their *Cursed Enchantments*, and what was perform'd by the latter, was manifestly owing to the **INFLUENCE** of the **BLESSED SPIRIT**: So there was the same between those of our **SAVIOUR**, and those of **ANTICHRIST**, and his Confederates, who counterfeited the *Miracles* of **CHRIST**, and his *Apottles*, and Followers, which had a most wonderful, and happy Issue, Mankind being thereby induc'd, to embrace the **BEST RELIGION**, that was ever introduc'd into the World.

Celsus, I confess, discovers, that he isn't entirely ignorant of the Scriptures, when he makes our *Saviour* say, *That Satan wou'd be the Original Author, of that Cursed Art, by which false Prophets wou'd impose upon the World*, but is a little too hasty in drawing

drawing his pretended Consequence, viz. *Our Saviour's Miracles, ev'n according to his own free Confession, did bear no Stamp of a DIVINE AUTHORITY, but were such Works, as were to be perform'd, it seems, by some of the Vilest Persons, that ever breath'd on Earth.*

For he makes no Difference at all, between those Things that are *Homogeneous*, and those that are *Heterogeneous*, as *Logicians* call 'em, between Things of the same, and Things of a very different Kind.

Now as a Wolf, and a Dog, do widely differ, tho' there seems to be some considerable Resemblance between 'em, with respect to their Shape, and Tone of Voice, and the same may be said of a Stock-Dove, and a Pidgeon: So what is done by the Help of Magick is not *of the same kind*, with what is perform'd by a Power, that is *Truly - Supernatural and Divine.*

And if such wonderful Things, ev'n in the Judgment of *Celsus*, are done, by the Assistance of Infernal Spirits, may we not rationally suppose, that Things, that are much more unaccountable, may be easily done, by the immediate Assistance of the Ever-Blessed God?

Z

Shall

Shall every Thing that is evil, be found among Men, and every Thing that is truly-good, be banish'd from the World? I think, there's much more Reason, to lay down this, as a General, and most Excellent Maxim, that where-ever there is any *real Evil*, under the Disguise of some real Good, *the opposite Good* must, at least, be *equal* to it, with Respect to its Degree.

And thus we may strongly argue, from *Miracles* wrought by the Help of *Magick*, to such as are perform'd, by the special Assistance of the *Great G O D. himself.*

We must either deny, that any Good or Evil, is to be found in the World, or, on the Supposition of the latter, must allow the former, and perhaps if we grant the former, we must affirm the latter; or at least on the Supposition of any *real Evil*, must allow an *equal Proportion* of that *real Good*, to which the *real Evil* is directly opposite.

He that will assert the one, without granting the other, seems to me, to talk at the same mad Rate, with one, who, confessing, that there are such Things as *Sophisms*, or false Shews of Reason, shou'd deny, that there's any such Thing, as *true Logick* in
the

the World, which is widely different from 'em.

So that I say, if we grant, that there is such a Thing as *Magick*, which has so great an Influence upon *wicked Demons*, as to engage 'em, to lend their ready, and joint Assistance, to those, who profess that *Art*, it naturally follows, that *Almighty God* is oblig'd, in some Sense, to exert his Power, in Performing such *Miracles*, as carry with 'em a convincing Evidence of the Truth, they were design'd to attest.

The next Thing, I take it, that we have to do, under this important Head, is to examine into the Life, and Conversation, of those, who pretend, they have a Power, to produce supernatural Effects, and to enquire, whether the wonderful Operations they perform, do any way tend, to the Temporal, and Eternal Advantage of the Souls of Men, and we must carefully distinguish between *Magicians*, who hold a Correspondence with the *Devil*, and those happy Persons, who are fill'd with the *Holy Spirit of God*, (whose Divine Impressions they experience both on their Souls, and Bodies,) who consult the true, and best Interest of Mankind, and endeavour

to make Men Profelites to the most Excellent Religion, that was ever reveal'd by a God.

Now if an Enquiry of this Kind be necessary, to distinguish true *Miracles* from those which are false, to prevent us from making *Miracles*, where there are really none, and engage our Assent, to the Truth of 'em, when the Finger of God may very plainly be discover'd, then we shall find, that the *Miracles*, which were wrought by *Moses*, and our *Blessed Saviour*, were owing to an *Extraordinary Appearance* of the *Power of God*, since they were Solemn Seals, by which the Truth of the *Jewish*, and *Christian Religion* was confirm'd, each of which, we know, was embrac'd by a considerable Body, of very Wise, and Virtuous Men.

Besides, how cou'd *Moses's Law*, which forbids the *Jews* to worship Images, and teaches 'em, to raise their Minds above all created Beings, and fix 'em, on the Eternal God, the Great Creator, and Sovereign Disposer of the Universe, I say, how cou'd such a Law derive its Original, from the *Horrid Practice* of *Magicians*.

And

And since 'tis a *Jew*, that *Celsus* personates, I wou'd humbly desire him, to resolve the following Question, How comes it to pass, that you (who firmly believe, that the Miracles, which *Moses* wrought, were perform'd, by the *Extraordinary Assistance of the Spirit of God*, and endeavour to defend 'em against those, who say, that the Wise Men of *Egypt* did strange Things, by the Help of Magick) can't be prevail'd with, to acknowledge, that our *Blessed Saviour* perform'd his Miracles, by an *Immediate Assistance* from Above, but are so strangely fond, of Imitating the *Egyptians*, whom you know, to be your sworn, and irreconcilable Enemies?

For if we may be allow'd, to judge of Miracles, by the Event, and argue in Favour of *YOUR JUSTLY-CELEBRATED MOSES* from his being rais'd up by Almighty God, to be the *HONOURABLE FOUNDER* of the *Jewish* Polity, I am sure, we may say far more, in Commendation of our *BLESSED SAVIOUR*, since the imperfect *Moses* isn't worthy to be nam'd, with the *HOLY*, and *SPOTLESS JESUS*.

For, as for *Moses*, 'tis obvious to remark, that he found, ready to his Hand, such Persons, among the Posterity of *Abraham*, as liv'd in a Religious Observance of Circumcision, that initiating Rite, and many approved Customs, which were handed down, by *Tradition*, from Father to Son, and he knew very well, that they were, in a great Measure, dispos'd, to receive his useful Instructions, and practise his wholesome Precepts, when 'twas he, under God, who brought 'em out of *Egypt*, and the Laws he gave 'em, had the Stamp of a *Divine Authority*, as You your self acknowledge.

But *Our Saviour* making, in some Sence, a much greater Attempt, introduc'd a Religion, that was in a Manner new, and caus'd it, to gain Ground continually, in Spite of all the rooted Prejudices of a different Education.

And if 'twas highly necessary, that *Moses* shou'd convince, not only the *Sanhedrim*, but also the Common People among the *Jews*, of the Truth of his Doctrine, by confirming it, with those *Miracles*, which the Scriptures gives us an Account of, there was at least equal Reason, why our *Blessed Saviour* shou'd take the same Method,

Method, to prove the *Divinity* of his Mission, since the People did naturally, eagerly, and very justly expect Signs, and Wonders, in such extraordinary Cases.

Nay, 'twas evidently necessary, he shou'd work far greater *Miracles* than *Moses*, to wean the bigotted *Jews*, from their Humane Traditions, and prove, by Dint of Argument, and plain Appeals to Sense, and common Observation, he was a Person, who was **TRULY DIVINE**, and in a far more noble Sence, than any of their Ancient, and **JUSTLY -- CELEBRATED** Prophets.

And how was it possible, that he shou'd be otherwise, when the Manifest Design of the Glorious Prophecies under the Old-Testament-Dispensation, was obicurely to reveal him, under the Character of the **TRUE MESSIAH**?

And what *Celsus's* *Jew* objects, against the *Christians*, may every *Whit* as well be urg'd by him, to the Prejudice of the Authority of *Moses*, Viz. *That Our Blessed Saviour was guilty of the most Notorious, and Vile Imposture.*

The Jew breaks out into the following Exclamation, *O the Force of Truth! He himself acquaints us, as your own Writings inform us, that many shou'd come. who wou'd perform the same Miracles, that he wrought himself, and on that very score, O horrid Impudence! he has the Face to charge 'em, with being wicked Men, and most notorious Impostors.*

And a Greek, or Egyptian, or any other Infidel, may say thus to a Jew, *O the Force of Truth! Moses has told us plainly, as your own Writings inform us, that many shou'd come, who wou'd perform the same Miracles, which he did himself, and yet be very wicked, and designing Wretches.*

For 'tis writ in YOUR OWN LAW, *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and he gives thee a Sign, or a Wonder, and the Sign, or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve 'em; Thou shalt not hearken to that Prophet, or Dreamer of Dreams.*

Deut. 13,
V. 1.

The

The pretended Jew goes on, and makes our Saviour say, *That Satan will be the Original Author of their Cursed Art*, thinking thereby to ridicule, and insult him. But the Christians, or any Infidels, may as well alledge, against his Celebrated *Moses*, that these Prophets, and Dreamers of Dreams wou'd counterfeit his Miracles.

The Jew says farther, *That our Saviour's Miracles, ev'n according to his own Confession, have no Stamp of a Divine Authority, but are such Works, as wou'd be done, by the Vilest Persons upon Earth.*

But an Infidel may turn the Argument upon *Moses*, and say, that his Miracles, ev'n according to his own Confession, have no Stamp of a *Divine Authority*, but are such Works, as wou'd be done, by Persons of the most infamous Character. And the following Words, that our Saviour, not being able, to resist the Evidence of Truth, do's, in the same Breath, condemn their Miracles, and his own, may every whit as well be retorted upon *Moses*.

And

And those Words of the Jew, *Isn't it, I beseech you, a most intolerable Thing, that from the same Actions He by all Means, must be denominated A GOD, and Others be branded with the Infamous Title of MAGICIANS?*

I say those Words of the Jew may be turn'd upon *Moses* thus, *Isn't it, I beseech you, a most intolerable Thing, that from the same Actions He by all Means must be denominated a Faithful, and EMINENT SERVANT of the BLESSED GOD, and Others be branded with the odious Title of IMPOSTORS.*

And those Words of the Jew, *Ev'n according to his own free Confession, we have no more Reason, to think, that they were wicked Men, than that he was a vile Wretch himself,* may be turn'd upon *Moses* thus, what an Instance of Madness is it, to look upon *Moses* as a *Servant of GOD*, and more than ordinary *Prophet*, and at the same Time to deny these honourable Characters, to such Persons, as were to work Miracles, as well as he, ev'n according to his own Prediction? And those Words of the Jew (which he thinks do give more Force to the
Ob-

Objection) viz. That our Saviour himself has told us, that such Actions were certain Indications of the most notorious Deceit, and Impiety, and not of a Divine Power, accompanying the Persons who perform'd 'em, may easily be retorted upon Moses.

CHAP. XXX.

THEN Celsus's Jew, speaking to those of his Native Country, who had embrac'd Christianity, asks us the following Question (for 'tis plain, he had his Eye upon us all along, tho' for a blind, he directs his Discourse to them) *What in God's Name cou'd induce you, to believe in your pretended Saviour ? Was it his Foretelling, that he shou'd rise from the dead ? But this may be turn'd upon Moses thus, What induc'd you to believe in your most Celebrated Prophet ? Was it his Foretelling the Circumstances of his Death, in the following Words, So Moses the Ser-*

Deut. 35.
V. 4. 5.

of

of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord. And he bury'd him, in a Valley, in the Land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: But no Man knows of his Sepulchre, unto this Day.

If the Jew ridicules our Saviour, because he fore-told, that he shou'd rise from the Dead, we may, by a Parity of Reason, expose Moses to Contempt, and say, that he was the Author of the *Pentateuch*, and inserted that Passage, *No one knows his Sepulchre, unto this Day*, with a politick Design, to render his Name Immortal.

Then the Jew continues his Discourse, to those of his own Country-Men, that were Christians, in the following Words, *Well, we'll suppose, says he, for once, that your pretended Saviour foretold, that he shou'd rise from the dead. But pray, have not others made Use of the same pityful Artifice, to take Advantage of the Weakness of some silly People?*

Zamolxis, Servant to Pythagoras, took this Method, to delude the Scythians, and it seems, Pythagoras was so cunning, as to do the same. And Rampsinus is reported to have done the like in Egypt, who, if any Credit
is

is to be giv'n to History, play'd at Dice with Ceres, in the Region of the dead, and forc'd her, to give him a Handkerchief, she had, that was curiously embroider'd. Orpheus did the same, among the People, who were call'd Odrysx, Protefilaus among the Thessalians, and Hercules, and Theseus among the Inhabitants of Tœnarus. But here it deserves to be consider'd, whether any Person, that was really dead, did ever rise with the same Numerical Body.

Do you, who look on' the Accounts, that are giv'n by others, as trifling Stories imagine, that the Catastrophe of your senceless Drama is ever the more just, or probable, because you endeavour to adorn it, with some fine Inventions, because your Crucify'd JESUS gave a dreadful Out-cry, when he lay at the very Point of Death, because there happen'd to be an Earth-quake, and a more than ordinary Darkness?

You boldly affirm, that he rose from the dead, (tho' it seems, he was far from being able, to secure his Person, while he remain'd on Earth) and shew'd upon his Body all the Marks of his Crucifixion, and the very Print of the Nails.

But you your selves acknowledge, that there was no Witness of the Truth of this Account, but one Fanatical Woman, and perhaps some Body else, of the same wretched Caball, that was plainly deluded, by her own idle Whimsies, or too easily believ'd, what she wou'd have to be true, as it frequently happens, or in the last Place (which seems to me more probable) had a Mind to amuse People, with this imaginary Miracle, and furnish such Cheats, as her Self, with a Pretence, for disturbing the World, with Notorious, and Vile Impostures.

But since 'tis a pretended Jew, that says all this, I shall answer him accordingly, and turn the Edge of his own Weapon upon Moses, by desiring, that he wou'd resolve me the following Question, Pray how many gross Impostors have done *Miracles*, to take Advantage of the Weakness of some silly People, and yet you are forward to give Credit to *Moses*, on the Account of the *Miracles*, he wrought?

Besides, methinks 'tis somewhat unsuitable to the Character of a Jew, to alledge the Instances of *Zamolxis*, and *Pythagoras*, since the Jews,
'tis

'tis well known, are little conversant with the *Greek Historians*.

The Account which he gives us; of *Rampsinitus*, and *Ceres*, wou'd have come, with a much better Grace, from the Mouth of an *Egyptian*, who, to lessen the Authority of *Moses*, might say, that 'twas much more probable, that the fore-mention'd Persons shou'd play at Dice together, in the Region of the Dead, and that he, as a Proof of his Descent thither, shou'd produce the embroider'd Handkerchief, which he took from the Goddess, than that *Moses* went into the Darkness, which God himself did inhabit, and that he alone had the Honour, to come near him, as he himself gives us an Account.

And we, who are the Followers of the *Holy Jesus*, may make the following Address, to the pretended *Jew*, when he talks at so extravagant a Rate, Pray how do you answer the *Greeks*, and *Egyptians*, who raise many of the same Objections against *Moses*, that you offer against our *Blessed Saviour*? When you have heap'd up all the Arguments, you can think of, in Defence of *Moses*, (tho' we think, at the same time, that we can solidly, and clearly prove him to be a True, and very Eminent Prophet.)
you'll

you'll be forc'd, unawares to acknowledge. ev'n according to those Arguments, which you your Selves make use of, that our *Blessed Saviour* did vastly, and indeed infinitely exceed him.

But because *Celsus's Jew* makes meer Game of the Histories which give us an Account, of the Descent of some *Heroes* into the Region of the Dead, and their Return from thence, and thinks, that their pretended DIVINE SORT OF ABSCONDING for a Time, and then coming back again, and making an Appearance upon the Stage of the World, was all Artifice, and Delusion (as he plainly intimates, when he speaks of the Opinion, that the *Odrysians* had of *Orpheus*, the *Theffalians* of *Protesilaus*, and the Inhabitants of *Tanarus* entertain'd of *Hercules*, and *Theseus*,) I shall make it appear, that there is no Manner of Comparison, between these Fables of the *Greeks*, and the Account that the *Evangelists* give us, of the Resurrection of *Our Saviour*.

'Tis obvious to remark, that these *Fabulous Heroes* cou'd descend into the Region of the Dead, whenever the Fancy took 'em, and return as soon

as

as they saw Cause to do so. But since *our Saviour* was crucify'd, in the open View of the *Jews*, and *Romans*, and after his Death, was tak'n down from the Cross, in the Sight of so many Witnesses, what Reason have we to imagine, that he feign'd his Descent, into the World of disembodiy'd Spirits, and his Return to *our World* again, as the *Greeks* have feign'd their *Heroes*, to have often done.

Nay, I'm inclin'd to think, that from the Story of these *Ancient Heroes* we may be furnish'd, with an Argument, that will take away, in a great Measure, the SUPPOS'D INFAMY of the CROSS of *CHRIST*.

Had our *Saviour* dy'd, in a common Way, and giv'n the *Jews* and *Romans* no convincing Proof, of the Reality of his Death, he had certainly been liable to Suspicion, as well as many of the *Heroes* of the *Greeks*, tho' he had really been loos'd from the strong Bonds of the Grave, in which he was some Time held.

I humbly conceive, therefore, that one principal Reason, why he dy'd, in so publick a Manner, was this, that no Person might have the least Umbrage of Jealousy, that he craftily retir'd from the World, and feign'd

A a

him-

himself, to be gone down to the Region of the Dead, and took his own Time to appear again, making the World believe, that he was ris'n from the Dead, when in Truth, he was all this While as much alive as ever.

But to remove any such foolish Suspicion, we need only consider, that his Disciples most willingly expos'd themselves to imminent Dangers, in publishing his Doctrine to the World, tho' they were not ignorant, of the rooted Prejudices of Men, against it. This certainly, they wou'd never have been tempted to do, if their Lord's Resurrection had been no more than an empty Fiction, especially if we consider, they not only perswaded others, to lay down their Lives, for the Cause of *Christ*, but with the greatest Readiness wou'd, if it were possible, have dy'd Ten Thousand Deaths, to promote it.

Then *Celsus's* Jew as if 'twas impossible, that any one shou'd rise from the Dead, with the same Numerical Body, makes Use of this rash Expression. *We must*, says he, *consider, whether any Person that was really dead, did ever*

ever rise, with the same Numerical and Proper Body.

This, One wou'd think, shou'dn't come, from the Mouth of one, who bears the Character of a Jew, who is suppos'd to believe, what we find recorded, in the two Books of *Kings*, concerning two Children; one of which was restor'd to Life by *Elijah*, and the other by *Elisba*. And I believe, 'twas Matter of our Saviour's Choice, to be educated among the Jews, because they were accusom'd to *Miracles*, that so by comparing what he did, with what had been done, in the former Ages of the World, they might be forc'd to acknowledge, that his *Miracles* deserv'd the Preference, by whom, and in whose Name, far greater Things were perform'd, than had been done, in the Memory of Man.

1 Kin. 17.
V. 22.
2 Kin. 4.
V. 34.

Then the pretended Jew (having produc'd the Histories of the Greeks, to shew us the strange Artifices, which the *Ancient Heroes* us'd, that People might imagine, that they were ris'n from the dead) directs his Discourse, to those of his Native Country, that were converted to the Christian Faith, in the following Words,

Do you look upon the Accounts, that are giv'n by others, as trifling Stories, and imagine, that the Catastrophe of your Senseless Drama is ever the more just, or probable, because you endeavour, to adorn it, with some Fine Inventions, because your Crucify'd Jesus gave a most dreadful Out-Cry, when he lay at the very Point of Death?

To this I answer, we believe, that the Account, which you have giv'n, of the *Ancient Heroes* of the Greeks, is grossly Fabulous, but we are fully perswaded, and I think, on very rational Grounds, that the Account, which is giv'n us, of our *Blessed Saviour*, in those Holy Scriptures, which are common to us both, and of which we make our Boast, as much as you your selves, is far from deserving that contemptible Character, which this Gentleman is pleas'd to give it.

Therefore, we can never grant, that the *Glorious Miracles*, which were wrought, in raising some Persons from the dead, as we are credibly inform'd, were no better than empty Fictions, and vain Amusements. We believe, that our *Saviour* did really rise from the dead, as the Prophets, and he himself had foretold he shou'd; and one Thing, among others, that makes his

his Resurrection the more remarkable, and in which it excell'd that of any other Person, is the following Consideration, that he wa'n't rais'd from the dead, by a Prophet, such as *Elijah*, or *Elisba* was, but by the IMMEDIATE INFLUENCE of the GOD-HEAD.

Hence it came to pass, that the happy Effects of his Resurrection were so Extraordinary, and so General.

Pray was the Resurrection of the two Children before-mention'd, a great and diffusive Blessing to Mankind, as we know the Resurrection of our *Saviour* was, when the Power of God did so eminently accompany the Preaching of the Gospel, and caus'd it to make so deep, and lasting an Impression, upon the Minds, of so many of his Hearers, who at first were strangely prejudic'd against him?

C H A P. XXXI.

THE pretended Jew goes on, and is ready to split his Sides with Laughing, at the Earth-quake, and ridicules the more than ordinary Darkness, that were the *AWFUL CONCOMITANTS* of our Saviour's Sufferings.

But this I have already answer'd, according to my weak Ability, and produc'd the Testimony of *Phlegon*, who acknowledges, that these wonderful Events did really happen, at the Time of our Saviour's Passion.

Then the Jew has the following Words, *You say, that he rose from the dead, (tho' he was far from being able, to secure his Person, while he remain'd on Earth) and shew'd upon his Body all the Marks of his Crucifixion, and the very Print of the Nails, with which his Hands, and Feet were pierc'd.*

But

But what dos this Gentleman mean, by saying, *He wa'n't able to secure his Person?* If he means, that our *Blessed Saviour* wa'n't able to secure himself, from the common Contagion of Vice, and Immorality, what he says, is absolutely, and manifestly false. For he never spoke a Word, or did an Action, that was in the least indecent, or unworthy of an INCARNATE GOD.

He was led, as a Sheep, to the Slaughter, and as a Lamb before her Shearers, was dumb; so he open'd not his Mouth. Viz. By way of Complaint, or Uneasiness, as St. Matthew acquaints us. Mat. 27
V. 2

But if *Celsus* means, that he didn't exert his Power, to secure himself, from the outward Calamities, to which he was expos'd, which morally consider'd, were neither Good, nor Evil; I have prov'd already, from the Gospels, that he submitted to 'em with the greatest Readiness imaginable, and shew'd the Reasons, which justify'd his Conduct.

Then the pretended Jew, having spoke of our Saviour's shewing all the Marks of his Crucifixion, and

the very Print of his Nails, says, *There was no Witness, of the Truth of this strange Account, but one Fanatical Woman, designing to ridicule Mary Magdalen, who saw him, after he was ris'n from the dead, as we are told in the Gospels, and because we are inform'd, that he was seen by others, he thought fit to add the following Words, And perhaps some Body else, of the same wretched Cabal.*

Then he plainly discovers, that he is one of those, who admire the *Epicurean Hypothesis*, when he endeavours, to shew, how a lively Idea of a deceas'd Person may be form'd, in the warm Imagination, in the following Words, *Who was deluded by her own idle Whimsies, or too easily believ'd, what she wou'd have to be true, as we know it frequently happens.*

There's a great Deal of Force, if we must give any heed to his *idle Whimsies*, in this scurrilous Language.

But ev'n from hence we may be furnish'd, with an Argument, to prove the IMMORTAL SUBSISTENCE of HUMANE SOULS, when they are separated from their Bodies, and the un-

unavoidable Consequence of what he here asserts, amounts to this at least, that it survives the Body.

For, if as *Plato* observes, in his *Dialogues*, about the *HUMANE SOUL*, there are certain Images of dead Persons, that are seen near their Tombs, then they must be owing to some Cause or other. And no Cause can be so rationally assign'd, as the Soul of the deceas'd Person, that assumes a Body, which is adapted to it.

But *Celsus*, who advances the fore-mention'd Notion, wou'd make People dream, while they are thoroughly awake, and have their Sences about 'em, and says, *They too easily believe, what they wou'd have to be true.* Such Dreams, indeed, as he talks of, are common, when the Bodily Sences are lock'd up by Sleep, but I think, we can't easily account for 'em, when Persons are awake, unless they be troubl'd with Melancholy, or fall'n into a Fit of the Frenzy.

Celsus,

Celsus, it seems, wa'n't ignorant of this, and that made him call *Mary Magdalen*, a *Fanarick*, tho' the Scripture-History says nothing like it, and our Saviour's Appearing, after he was ris'n from the dead, and showing all the Marks, that were made in his Crucify'd Body, must, according to *Celsus*, be solv'd by the Doctrine of the Images of deceas'd Persons, but, according to the Scripture-Account, (which he's so cunning as to use, when he thinks that it serves his purpose) the Matter of Fact stood thus.

Our Saviour call'd one of his Disciples to him, who cou'dn't for his Life believe, that he was ris'n from the dead, with the same Body, I say, with the same Body. For the Appearance of *Humane Souls*, after Death, don't seem to be the least Matter of his Doubt.

Therefore, 'tis remarkable, that he
 John 20. dos'n't say, *Except I see him*, but Ex-
 V. 25. cept *I shall see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand, into his Sides, I will not believe.*

He didn't question, but that the Soul of a deceas'd Person might animate a Body, which wou'd be visible to the corporeal Eye, and, bear

a Resemblance to that, from which
'twas separated by Death, not only
with respect to the Eyes, and Voice,
and Mien,

but also,

Sometimes appear in a like Habit cloath'd.

Hom. II.
Book 23,
V. 67.

Therefore our Saviour call'd Thomas
to him, and said, *Reach hither thy
Finger, and behold my Hands, and reach
hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my
Side, and be not faithless, but believ-
ing.*

John 20,
V. 27.

And by the Way, 'twas agreeable,
to the many Prophecies, which we
meet with concerning him, the many
evident *Miracles* he wrought, and un-
usual Accidents, that befell him, that
he shou'd rise from the Dead, and
that this considerable Circumstance
shou'd, as it were, crown, and com-
pleat the rest.

The Prophetical Psalmist speaking
in the Person of our Saviour, has
this Prophecy, relating to him, *My
Flesh also shall rest in Hope, for thou
wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor
suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption.*

Psalms 16,
V. 9.

And the Body, with which our
Saviour rose from the Dead, did nei-
ther consist, of such gross Matter, as
it

it consisted of before, nor of such subtil Matter, as that with which separate Souls are cloath'd, when an Apparition appears.

Therefore St. John has the following Words, *His Disciples were within, and Thomas with 'em. Then came Jesus, the Doors being shut, and stood in the Midst, and said, Peace be unto you.* And he adds these Words, *Then says he to Thomas, reach hither thy Finger.*

St. Luke tells us, that *When Simon and Cleopas were talking of the Things that had happen'd to him, Jesus himself drew near, and went with 'em. But their Eyes were holden, that they shou'd not know him. And he said to 'em, What Manner of Communications are these, that ye have with one another, as ye walk?* And in the same Chapter he has these Words, *And their Eyes were open'd, and they knew him, and he vanish'd out of their Sight.*

And tho' Celsus compares this Account, which the Gospels give us, of the Appearance, which our Saviour made, after he was ris'n from the Dead, to common Stories of wonderful Apparitions, and laughs at those, who were Eye-Witnesses of the Fact; yet they who impartially examine into Matters, and are furnish'd with a Capacity, to make nice
En-

Enquiries, will be forc'd to acknowledge, there was something in the Case before us, that was very remarkable, and surprizing.

CHAP. XXXII.

THEN Celsus offers an Objection, which do's a little deserve to be consider'd by us, *If Christ had a Mind*, says he, *to exert the Divine Power, which he pretended to have, certainly he ought to have appear'd to his Enemies, to the Judge, who pass'd the Sentence of Death upon him, and to the whole Body of the People, who rose up, as it were, in Arms against him.*

And indeed we don't go about to deny, that the Scripture plainly acquaints us, that after he was ris'n from the dead, he refus'd to appear so publickly, and to all Persons promiscuously, as he did before. *He was seen of the Apostles forty Days, and spoke of Things, pertaining to the Kingdom of God, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles.*

Acts 1,
V. 3.

And

And we read in the Gospels, that he wa'n't continually with 'em, but sometimes after the Interval of eight Days, appear'd in the midst of 'em, when the Doors were shut, and at other Opportunities appear'd to 'em, in a very different Manner.

And St. Paul, intimating to us, that he did't so frequently appear then, as he had done before, has the following Words, *I deliver'd unto you first of* ^{1 Cor. 15.} *all, that which I also receiv'd, how that* ^{V. 3, &c.} *Christ dy'd for our Sins, according to the Scriptures. And that he was bury'd, and that he rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater Part remain, unto this present, but some are fall'n asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due Time.*

Here a very difficult Question do's occur, that requires the closest Application, and that not of ordinary Christians, but of those, who have attain'd to the greatest Eminency, in the School of Christ, viz. Why our Saviour refus'd, to expose himself to pub-

publick View, after his Resurrection, as he had done before.

There's no need, I think, in a Book of this Nature, (the main Design of which is to defend the Christian Religion, against the bold Attempts of its malicious Adversaries) to give a full, or large Solution of so Critical a Point. But I shall offer a few Thoughts at present, which, I hope, will give the Reader some small Satisfaction, in this difficult Affair.

Tho' our SAVIOUR was but ONE, with respect to HIS PERSON; yet there were SEVERAL NOTIONS, under which Mankind did consider him, and different Persons saw him, in very different Sences.

That there were several Capacities, in which Mankind did consider him, is plain from such Expressions as these, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. I am the Bread, I am the Door*; and many other Expressions; that I cou'd easily name, if Occasion offer'd.

John 14.
V. 6.
John 6,
V. 35.
John 10,
V. 9.

That different Persons saw him, in very different Sences, will readily be granted by those, who can assign the Reason, why he didn't take all the Disciples with him, into the Mount of Transfiguration, but only Peter, James, and John, viz, Because they alone

alone cou'd bear the Brightness of so glorious a Sight, behold the dazzling Lustre of *Moses*, and *Elias*, and hear the Voice, that came from Heaven, and the Charming Conversation, which those two Celebrated Prophets had the Honour, and Happiness, to maintain, with the Blessed Jesus.

Mat. 5, I'm of the Opinion, I confess, that
V 1. before he went up to the Mountain, and instructed his Disciples, concerning the *Beatitudes*, he didn't appear to those, who were brought to him in the Evening, at the Foot of the Mountain, and were cur'd of their Distempers, I say, he didn't appear to those, who were indispos'd, and stood in need of his healing Power, in the same Manner as he did to them, who enjoy'd a confirm'd State of Health, and were able to go up with him to the Mountain. And as he privately explain'd the Meaning of his Parables, to his Disciples, whose Sense of Hearing was much quicker, than that of the Common People, to whose Ears there was nothing convey'd too often, but an empty Sound: So I believe, there was some considerable Difference, in their spiritual, and ev'n their corporeal Sight.

'Tis

'Tis farther plain, that our Saviour wa'n't seen by all Persons, after the same manner, from the Instance of Judas, who being about to betray him, said to his Accomplices, *He whom I shall kiss is he*, intimating they didn't know him. And that Expression of our Saviour, *I sat daily with you, teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on me*; do's manifestly favour the Opinion, which I have here laid down.

Mat 26.
V. 48.

Ibid.
V. 55.

Since therefore, we have such Apprehensions of our Saviour, not only with respect to his Divinity, which was more latent, and undiscern'd by the Generality of Men, but also with respect to his Humane Body, the Form of which, I believe, he chang'd, when ever he thought fit to do it; We think, that before his Death (by which he spoil'd Principalities, and Powers) he was, in some Sense, discernable by all, but afterwards ev'n many of those, who had formerly seen him, had not Sences, that were adapted to the Sight of a ris'n Jesus.

'Twas therefore an Instance of his Condescension to the Weakness of Men's Capacities, that he didn't expose himself to Publick View, after he was ris'n from the dead, to Publick View, did I say, when 'twa'n't without frequent Intervals, that he appear'd ev'n to his Apostles, and Disciples?

For after he had honourably, and happily accomplish'd the Work of our Redemption, we have Reason to believe, that his *Divinity* shone with much brighter Rays, thro' the Glass, if I may so say, of his *Humane Nature*.

Cephas, who was, as it were, the First-Fruits of the Apostles, was the first, that saw him, then the Twelve (*Matthias* being chosen, in the Room of *Judas*) then five Hundred Brethren at once, then *James*, then perhaps all the *Seventy* Disciples, and at last the Apostle *Paul*, (as one born out of due Time) who knew very well, why he us'd the following Expression, in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*,
 Eph. 3. V. 8, *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace giv'n.* And perhaps those Words, *Less than the least of all Saints*, and those Words, *Born out of due Time*, may have a greater Affinity, than some Persons
 on

on the first View, may be ready to imagine.

And as there's no Colour of Reason, for any One to reflect upon our Blessed Saviour, for not taking all the Apostles with him, to the Mount of Transfiguration, but only three of 'em, when he was going to display the Glory of his Raiment, and the Heav'nly Lustre of Moses, and Elias, who were to discourse with him, in a familiar Manner: So neither is there just Cause, for any one to find Fault with the Account, which we meet with, in the Gospels; viz. That he didn't expose himself, after his Resurrection, to the View of all, but only of those, whose Eyes were strong enough, to bear the dazzling Brightness of so glorious an Object. And I think, that the following Expression, which is us'd by the Apostle Paul, *To this End Christ both dy'd, and rose, and reviv'd, that he might be Lord, both of the Dead, and of the Living*, may have a Reference to the Subject, on which I am now discoursing.

Rom 14.
V. 9.

The Dead, over whom he has a rightful Power, are they of whom the Apostle speaks, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, *The Trumpet*,

Cor. 1.
V. 52.

says he, *shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible.*

Under the Term *Living*, I conceive he comprehends, not only those, who shall be rais'd from the dead, to an Immortal Life, but those also, who may be consider'd by us, in a very different Capacity, I mean those, who will be alive, at the Coming of our Lord, and be chang'd.

He says, *We shall be chang'd*, which Words are brought in by him, after he had said, *That the Dead shall be rais'd incorruptible.* And in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, he describes the Difference, between the Dead, and the Living, in the following Words, I

1 Thes. 4. V. 13. wou'dn't have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, ev'n as others, who have no Hope, for if we believe, that Jesus dy'd, and rose again, ev'n them also, who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the Word of the Lord, that we, who are alive, and remain, to the Coming of the Lord, sha'n't prevent them, who are asleep. The Sence of which Verses I have giv'n, according to the best of my Judgment, in my Comment on the foregoing Epistle.

Now

Now we needn't wonder, that our Saviour, after his Resurrection, wa'n't seen by all, that believ'd in him, since the Apostle, writing to the Corinthians, as Persons of mean Attainments, has the following Words, *I determine, to know nothing, among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd.* And says in another Place, *Hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal.*

1 Cor. 4.

V. 4.

1 Cor. 3.

V. 2.

I confess, the Scriptures, in which the Characters of infinite Wisdom are so legible, do acquaint us, that our Saviour, before his Death, expos'd himself to Publick View (tho' ev'n here some Exceptions must be made) but after he was ris'n from the Dead, he was no longer promiscuously seen by all, but according to the Direction of Heaven, consulted the Capacities of those, to whom he thought fit to appear.

As we read in Scripture, that God appear'd to *Abraham*, and other Holy Men, tho' there were considerable Intervals, and we know very well, that he didn't appear to all: So we may rationally suppose, that the SON OF GOD, when he made his Appearance to Persons, after he was ris'n from the dead, took a prudent Method, not unlike that, which God had before observ'd, in making Discoveries of himself, to the Ancient Fathers of the Jewish Church.

So that I have return'd an Answer, (according to my weak Ability, and as far as I thought, consistent with the Design of the present Treatise) to the Objection which *Celsus* makes, in the following Words, *If Christ says he, had a Mind, to exert his Divine Power, he ought to have appear'd to his Enemies, to the Judge, who pass'd the Sentence of Death upon him, and to the whole Body of the People, who, as it were, took up Arms against him.*

• Sure I am, that he acted wisely, in not appearing to his Enemies, or the Judge, who condemn'd him. For he happily prevented 'em from being struck blind, like the *Sodomites* of old, who lay in wait for the Angels, who,

who, as the Scripture acquaints us, were kindly entertain'd by Lot. Gen. 19, 9, 10.

The Men, 'tis said, put forth their Hand, and pulled Lot into the House to 'em, and shut the Door, and they smote the Men, that were at the Door of the House, with Blindness, both small, and great, so that they wear'd themselves, to find the Door.

The Design of our Saviour was to shew his **DIVINE POWER**, in a Way, suited to the Capacities of Men, and the **TRUE REASON** why he refus'd, to appear so publicly, after he was ris'n from the Dead, as before, was this; because he was then too bright an Object, to be beheld by **COMMON EYES**.

Therefore Celsus, as if he had wrack'd his Brains, to the utmost, cou'd hardly have thought of any Thing, that had less Argument in it, than the following Words, *What! was he afraid, that he shou'd be hung upon the Cross again, when if we may give any Heed to you, he was no less than A GOD? Besides I suppose, you'll hardly say, that he came into the World, on Purpose to ABSCOND.*

But 'tis evident, he came into the World, to be seen by few comparatively, and many of those, who saw

him were, in a great Measure, Strangers to the *Bright Rays* of his Divinity.

Nay, he was altogether unknown to many, in as much as he came, to discover his Glory, to those who were Children of the Light, and so were freed from that worse than *Egyptian* Darkness, which naturally draws a Veil, over the Minds of Men.

And he came, with this generous Design, to display the Riches of his Grace, to those, who were *Unrighteous*, and lay wallowing, in their Filth, and Gore, and to act the Part of the best Physician, that the World cou'd ever boast of, in curing those, whose Minds were attended, with innumerable, and great Disorders.

CHAP

C H A P. XXXIII.

LET us see, what *Celsus* adds, *Had he had a Mind,* says he, *to have giv'n a Proof, of his pretended Divinity, one wou'd think, he shou'd have VANISH'D, the very Moment, he was nail'd to the Cross.*

But this is just for all the World like the idle, and prophane Talk of those, who deny an *Over-ruling Providence*, and are erecting new Schemes, in their swarm, and fruitful Imagination, for the more regular Government of the World, and have the horrid Impudence to say, that had the Affairs of it been left entirely to their prudent Management, the Benefit of the Universe had been more effectually consulted, than now it is, tho' many Things in their *Hypothesis* are possible, but still they add to the *seeming Irregularities*, that we allow to have happen'd, by their *Fanciful Schemes*, or they

they suppose that to be done, which, in some Respects, might have a Natural Tendency, to the Advantage of the Universe, but go, on so many, and such weak *Hypotheses*, as wou'd destroy the very Nature of Things, and on both Accounts, are perhaps equally guilty, of apparent, and gross Absurdities.

But to return a more direct Answer to *Celsus*, I might acquaint him, that our Saviour, by Virtue of his *Divine Nature*, cou'd have disappear'd, if he pleas'd, as soon as ever he was nail'd, to the *Accursed Tree*.

This is self-evident to those, who believe, and know that he was GOD. And 'tis plain to them, who consult the Gospels, if they don't only rely on their Authority, so far as they imagine, that they serve their turn, and think that all is meer Fiction, and Jargon, that makes in the least against 'em. St. *Luke* tells us, that After his Resurrection he took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to
 Luke 24. Simon, and Cleopas. And when they
 V. 31. had tak'n it, their Eyes were open'd, and they knew him, and he vanish'd out of their Sight.

But I cou'd easily shew, that 'twas inconsistent with the Design, which he had, in Coming into the World,

to

to vanish, as soon as ever he was crucify'd.

And when we read the History of our Saviour, we must not rest in the bare Literal Sense, as if that were all, that the Holy Ghost design'd. For every considerable Circumstance, that occurs in it, contains, or naturally leads us, to some Mystery, or other, which a judicious Reader, with some Difficulty, may perceive.

For Instance, the Crucifixion of our Saviour was a Representation, of what is meant by the following Expression of the Apostle, *I am crucify'd with Christ*; And by those other Words, *God forbid, that I shou'd glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is crucify'd unto me, and I unto the World*. His Death was necessary, that we might say, with the Apostle, *In that he dy'd, he dy'd unto Sin once*, and that the righteous, *being made conformable to his Death*, might say, with the Apostle, *If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him*.

Gal. 2.
V. 20.

Gal. 6.
V. 14.

Rom. 6.
V. 10.

2 Tim. 2.
V. 4.

So his Burial was design'd, to represent our Conformity to his Death, and our Crucifixion with him, as St. Paul observes; *We are bury'd with him*, says he, *by Baptism into Death*.

But

But I shall give a fuller Account of his Burial, of his Tomb, and of the Person, that buried him, in a distinct Treatise, on these important Subjects.

At present, I shall only mention, the Linnen Cloaths, in which, Divine Providence did wisely order, that the Body of the *Spotless Jesus* shou'd be wrap'd, and the New Sepulcher, that was hewn in Stone, or cut out of a Rock, by *Joseph of Arimathea*, wherein, as *St. Luke*, and *St. John* observe, no Man was ever laid before.

It may not be amiss, to consider, whether the Account of the Sepulcher of our *Blessed Lord*, which has the Unanimous Consent of Three Evangelists, don't carry with it, some convincing Evidence of Truth, and whether they, who apply themselves, to the *Allegorical Sence* of Scripture, ought not to seek for some *Mystical Reason*, why our *Saviour* shou'd be laid, in a *New Sepulchre*, as *St. Mathew*, and *St. John* acquaints us, and why it shou'd be such a one, as *St. Luke*, and *St. John* mention, wherein no Man had ever been laid before him. For 'twas highly requisite, that one, whose seemingly
 Tragical

Mat. 27.

V. 60.

John 19.

V. 41.

Tragical End was grac'd with so uncommon Circumstances, and such Marks of Honour, that our Saviour, who after he was dead, gave Signs of Life, I mean the Water, and Blood, that flow'd from his pierced Side, should have something, that was very remarkable, in his Burial, that as he was free from the least Stain of Moral Impurity, being born out of the ordinary Way, of Humane Generation: So his Burial might bear the Marks, of an untainted Purity, which is *Mystically* represented to us, by the *New Sepulchre*, in which he was laid, which was not compos'd, of many Stones, joyn'd together, according to the Rules of Art, but was one entire Piece, cut out of the Rock, made hollow, and every Way adapted for the Purpose.

I might have made several other Remarks, and from these outward Signs have rais'd my Thoughts much higher, in Contemplation of those sublime Things, which they faintly represent.

But they wou'd afford such vast Plenty, of most excellent Matter, as wou'd very well deserve a distinct Discourse, and a considerable Volume by it self.

At present I shall only say, 'twas fit, that he, who had design'd, to hang upon a Cross, and to dye, like a Man, shou'd be bury'd, in such a Manner, as was suitable to his *Mysterious Death*, and so answer his Character to the last.

But suppose, the Evangelists had acquainted us, that our Saviour vanish'd, as soon as ever he was nail'd to the Cross, then Celsus, and the Infidels, so hard is it to please 'em! wou'd have come upon us, and have said, *Good Sirs, What Crochet came into his Head, that he shou'd stay, 'till he was nail'd to his Cross, before he thought fit to vanish, or how came he to forget, to take this Matter into his serious Thoughts, before he came to the Place, where he was shamefully executed?*

If therefore, they find Fault with the Evangelists, for not telling us, that our Saviour vanish'd, when he was going to be crucify'd, but giving us an impartial Account of Matters, we have more Reason to blame them severely, for not believing, that our Saviour rose from the dead, and after his Resurrection, appear'd to his Disciples, tho' The Doors were shut,

and

and gave Bread to two of 'em, and
vanish'd, as soon as he had done dis-
couraging with 'em.

CHAP. XXXIV.

BUT I can't conceive, why Celsus
shou'd say, that our Blessed Sa-
viour did **ABSCOND**. What Am-
bassador, says he, did ever affect to
conceal himself, when One wou'd think,
'tis plain enough, that his Business was
to deliver his Embassy?

But this is a meer Slander, as is suf-
ficiently evident, from the Words of
our Saviour, to those, who endeavour'd
to apprehend him, I sat daily, says he,
with you in the Temple, and ye laid
no hold on me.

As for what Celsus needlessly repeats,
I shall content my self with the An-
swer, which I have already giv'n.

He goes on, and says, Did your pre-
tended Saviour in his Life-Time, teach
his Doctrine, in a most Publick Man-
ner, and after his Resurrection, only
appear

Mat. 26.
V. 55.

appear to one Fanatical Woman, or some others, who belong'd to the same wretched Cabal, because, when he was living, the World had more Sense, than to give Credit to him, but every one, forsooth, must believe the Doctrine of the Resurrection of Course?

But that he appear'd only to one Woman, is most notoriously false. For St. Mathew has the following Words, *In the End of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the first Day of the Week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to see the Sepulchre. And behold there was a great Earth-quake, for the Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came, and roll'd back the Stone, from the Door, and sat upon it. A little after he has these Words, Behold Jesus met them, (i. e. the two Marys) saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the Feet, and worshipp'd him.*

Mat. 28.
V. 1.

ibid. 9.

And I have already answer'd what Celsus objects, in the following Words, *When he was crucify'd, says he, there were Witnesses enough, but when he rose from the dead, at most he appear'd, only to a small Company of Scoundrels.*

I have sufficiently shown, that our Saviour cou'dn't be seen by all, and I shall only add at present, that all Persons were capable at Times, of seeing him, with respect to his *Humane Nature*, but to discern the Bright Rays, or ev'n the least Glimmerings of his *DEITY*, was what exceeded the Capacity of the Generality of Men.

I speak now, of his *Humane*, and *Divine Nature*, in Contra-Distinction to each other, and not as having a mutual Reference, and close Connexion.

But pray observe, how weakly *Celsus* talks, having said, *That our Saviour appear'd only to one Fanatical Woman, or perhaps a few Others of the same wretched Cabal*; he adds the following Words, *When he was crucify'd, says he, there were Witnesses enough, but when he rose from the dead, he appear'd but to a few, whereas had he had any Brains, he must have tak'n the quite contrary Course.*

But I wou'd fain know what he means by the latter Words? According to his weak Judgment, our Saviour must have tak'n such Methods, as were plainly impracticable, and

Cc

grossly

grossly absurd, viz. He must be crucify'd, forsooth, in the Sight but of a single Person, and have appear'd to all Men PROMISCUOUSLY, when he was ris'n from the dead, for those Words *He shou'd have tak'n the quite contrary Course*, will bear no other tolerable Sence, if I am capable of making a Judgment, upon any Thing.

Our Saviour has acquainted us, with the Person, that sent him, in the following Words, *No Man knows the Father, save the Son*, and in these Words, *No Man has seen God, at any Time; but the only Begotten Son, who is in the Bosom of the Father, he has declar'd him*.

He it is, who reveals the Things of God, to his true Disciples, and we endeavour to form our Scheme of Divinity, upon his most excellent Model, who sometimes tells us, that
 1 Joⁿ 1. V. 5. GOD is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all, and at other Times, That
 John 4. V. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in Truth.

And any one, that will, may learn, for what End, God sent his Son into the World, if he will but consult the Prophecies, relating to our Saviour,
 our,

our, and the Writings of the *Evangelists*, and *Apostles*, and especially the *Epistles* of *St. Paul*.

He came, to instruct us, in the true, and most direct Way, to Peace here, and Compleat, and Eternal Happiness hereafter, and to take a most BLESSED ADVANTAGE, if I may so say, of the HORRID IMPIETY, and continual PROVO-CATIONS of Impenitent, and daring Sinners.

Celsus being ignorant of this, has the following Words, *He came, it seems, to instruct good Men, and to make free, and Monstrously-large Offers of his Grace, ev'n to the vilest Rebels.*

Then says he, *If he had, so Singular a Fancy to ABSCOND, what Need was there, I wonder, of a Voice from Heav'n, saying, that he was the SON of GOD. And if he hadn't a Mind to ABSCOND, then why did he suffer, and dye?*

He imagines, I perceive, that the Accounts, which we meet with in the Gospels, are inconsistent with themselves, not being able, with all his pretended Sagacity, to comprehend, or frame any just Idea, of the Design of our Blessed Saviour, which was

neither to lye hid altogether, and so be entirely useleſs, and a meer Cypher in his Own Creation, nor to have his Bright Side, if I may ſo ſay, I mean his DIVINE NATURE KNOWN, to many of thoſe very Perſons, who had the Honour, to ſee him, with their Bodily Eyes.

The Voice, that came to him from Heav'n, ſaying, *This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleas'd*, isn't ſaid to be heard by the Multitude, as Celsus's Jew imagines, and the other Voice, which is ſaid to come from the Cloud, was only heard, by thoſe, who went up, with our Saviour, to the Mountain. For ſuch is the Nature of a Voice from Heav'n, that it can only be heard, by thoſe, for whom God is pleas'd, for wiſe Reaſons, to deſign it.

I don't ſpeak here, of the meer Vibration of the Particles of the Air, or any Philoſophical Account, that may be giv'n of a Voice, but of a *Spiritual Senſation*, whereby one, who has Spiritual Senſes exercis'd, do's hear God ſpeak, when one, who is deaf, to all the awakening Precepts, of Virtue, and Piety, is entirely ignorant of what is ſaid, I mean, as to any valuable, and laſting Purpoſe, that it ſerves.

This

This I think, is a sufficient Answer, to those Words of Celsus, *What Need was there, of a Voice from Heaven, saying, that he was the SON OF GOD?*

And what I have already offer'd, concerning the Sufferings of our Saviour, is a satisfactory Answer, I judge, to the following Words, *If he hadn't a Mind to conceal his Power, and obscure his Glory, then sure he was born, under a very unhappy Planet, or else he had never suffer'd, and dy'd.*

Then Celsus's *Jew*, is pleas'd to draw a Consequence, which is very unnatural, and unjust. For it do's by no Means follow, that because our Saviour, by his Sufferings, has taught us to bid Defiance to Death it self, therefore when he rose from the Dead, he shou'd have order'd the whole World, to make a General Rendezvouz, and have publickly acquainted 'em, with the Reason, why he left the Realms of Light, and Glory, and thought it worth his While, to come down, into this miserable, and sinful World.

For this he had already done, when
 Mat. 11. he said, *Come unto me, all ye that la-*
 V. 28. *bour, and are heavy-laden, and I will*
give you Rest. This he had also done,
 in the long Sermon, which he preach'd
 upon the Mount, concerning the *Beati-*
tudes, and his Discourses on several
 other Subjects, which are annex'd to
 it, and in his useful Parables, and fre-
 quent Disputes, with the *Scribes*, and
Pharisees. And St. *John* acquaints us,
 in his Gospel, with what a Majesty
 our *Saviour* spoke, which is not so
 much to be understood of the Arti-
 ficial Colours of Humane Rhetorick,
 or a graceful Elocution, and happy
 Gesture, as of those Divine, Import-
 ant, and Plain, but *Commanding*
Truths, that were the Subject-Matter
 of his frequent Discourses. And we
 learn, from the other Gospels, that our
Saviour spoke, with such a modest
 Air of Assurance, and such an *Un-*
common Authority, as always engag'd
 the Attention, and Affections, and
 rais'd the Admiration of the List'ning
 Audience, many of whom, did, as it
 were, hang upon his precious Lips,
 and cou'd gladly have imparted to
 him their very Souls, if it had been
 possible.

Then

Then drawing to a Conclusion, he adds, *All that I have said, has been borrow'd, from your own approv'd Authors, so that I needn't produce any other Testimonies, since the Edge of your own Weapons, is sufficiently turn'd upon your selves.*

But I have already shown, that when he directs his Discourse to our Saviour, or to us, he is pleas'd, to interlard it, with Abundance of ridiculous Stories, that I'm confident, the Evangelists never thought of, and it remains, to be prov'd, that we are wounded by our own Weapons, unless his fond Imagination must always pass, for a clear, and sufficient Proof, of one of the greatest Untruths, that was ever broach'd in the World.

C H A P. XXXV.

THEN *Celsus* breaks forth into the following Exclamation, *Good God ! Can we imagine, that a God shou'd come down, from Heav'n to Earth, and yet that Men shou'd refuse to embrace his Doctrine?*

But to this I answer, that *Moses* himself acquaints us, that God did evidently, gloriously, and frequently, appear to the *Jews*, when Miracles were wrought in *Egypt*, when they pass'd the *Red Sea*, and had the Pillar of Cloud, and of Fire, to conduct 'em, and when the Law was declar'd to 'em, in a very publick Manner, and with Circumstances of the most Awful Solemnity, and yet they, who were Eye-Witnesses, of these amazing Instances of an Over-ruling Providence, and of the special Care, which Heaven took of *them*, were guilty of the grossest Infidelity. For had they really, and firmly believ'd what they had seen,

seen, and heard, they had never been
so infatuated, as to have made the Calf,
to *Have chang'd their Glory, into the* Exod. 32.
V. 4
Similitude of an Ox, that eats Grass;
or to have said to one another, speak-
ing of the Calf, *These be thy Gods, O* Psalm. 105.
V. 20.
Israel, which brought thee up, out of the
Land of Egypt,

And 'tis too plain, that the Car-
riage of the *Jews*, when God appear'd
so often to 'em, and wrought so many
Miracles for 'em, and especially when
they were wand'ring, in the Wilder-
ness, as we learn, ev'n from their
own Sacred Writings, and their proud
Contempt of the Doctrine, which our
Blessed Lord introduc'd, tho' he deli-
ver'd it, with the greatest Authority,
and confirm'd it by Miracles, I say,
'tis too plain, that the Carriage of the
Jews, upon these various, and astonish-
ing Scenes of Action, was owing to
the same unhappy Cause, I mean, their
wretched Unbelief.

And 'tis no great Wonder, that
they didn't believe in our *Saviour*,
since they did but tread, in the Steps
of their long-descended Ancestors, for
whom they profess to have so pro-
found a Veneration.

Then

Then Celsus asks, *What God, I beseech you, did ever appear among Men, and wa'n't credited by 'em, especially if he was so Politick, as to send 'em Word of his Coming?* And how cou'd the Jews themselves, as stupid as they always were, be ignorant of a Person, whom, 'tis well known, they had for many Ages expected?

But I wou'd fain know of the Jews, which were the greater Miracles, those that were wrought in Egypt, and the Wilderness, or those that were perform'd by our Saviour, in the open View of his cruel, and malicious Enemies.

If they say, the former were the greater, then 'tis natural enough to suppose, that they, who have resisted the Evidence of those Miracles, which, in their Esteem, are the greater, shou'd much more despise those, which, they think, are far inferiour to 'em; I mean the Miracles, that were wrought by our Blessed Saviour. Or, if they say, that the Miracles of Moses, and those which our Saviour perform'd, are equal, we needn't wonder, that the Jewish Nation shou'd, at different Times, be guilty of giving Way, to the Workings
of

of their Horrid Unbelief, in Cases that on many Accounts, were Parallel.

The Moral Law was first publish'd to the Jews by *Moses*, who acquaints us, that in those early Times, their Fore-Fathers were chargeable with the fore-mention'd Sin, and many other notorious Crimes. And when the *New Law*, and *Second Covenant* was first publish'd by our *Saviour*, the Jews plainly show'd, by their wretched Unbelief, that they were the genuine Offspring of those notorious Unbelievers, in the Wilderness, and we may justly apply to 'em, those Words of our *Saviour*, *Truly ye bear Witness, that ye allow the Deeds of your Fathers.* And those of the Prophet, *Thy Life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear Day and Night, and shalt have no Assurance of thy Life.* For they didn't believe in him, who came to give Life to a World, that was dead in Sin.

Luke 11.
V. 48.

Dent. 28.
V. 66.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

WHAT Celsus objects farther, in the Person of a Jew, may easily be retorted upon Moses, and the Prophets. He finds Fault with our Saviour, for exceeding, as he thinks, the Bounds of Reason, and Modesty, when he threatens, and upbraids, and says, *Woe be unto you*, and *I fore-tell you*, which, he says, plainly intimates, that he wanted Power, to prevail with his Hearers, and is an Argument, that he was so far from being *A God*, that he hadn't the *Common Prudence* of a Man.

But we may easily retort his own Argument upon him.

For God himself uses many Expressions, in the Law, and the Prophets, that sound every whit as harsh, as those Words, *Woe be unto you*, which our Saviour makes use of, in the Gospels. *Woe unto them*, says the Pro-

Prophet Isaiah, that join House to House, Isaiah 5. V. 8.
 that lay Field to Field. And again, ibid. V. 11.
 Wo unto them, that rise up early, that
 they may follow strong Drink. And
 again, Wo unto them, that draw In-
 quity with Cords of Vanity. And again,
 Wo unto them, that call Evil Good, V. 20.
 and Good Evil. And again, Wo unto
 them, who are mighty to drink Wine. V. 22.
 And abundance of Instances of the
 like Nature might easily be produc'd,
 if Occasion offer'd.

What think you, of that Expres-
 sion of the fore-mention'd Prophet?
Oh sinful Nation, a People laden with Isaiah 1. V. 4.
Iniquity, a Seed of evil Doers, Chil-
aren that are Corrupters! Don't we
 meet with as bitter Invectives, in
 that Chapter, as any that our Sa-
 viour ever us'd? Tour Country, says
 the Prophet, is desolate, your Cities are ibid. V. 7.
 burnt with Fire: Tour Land Strangers
 devour it in your Presence, and 'tis de-
 solate, as overthrown by Strangers.

I might also instance in that Place,
 in Ezekiel, where God says to the
 Prophet, *Thou dwellest among Scor-* Ezek. 2. V. 6.
pions.

So that I can hardly think, that *Celsus* can be in Earnest, when he makes his *Jew* find Fault with our *Saviour*, as exceeding the Bounds of Reason, and Modesty, as often as he us'd such Expressions as these, **WOE BE UNTO YOU, and I FORETELL YOU.** For what the *Jew* says, may be retorted on himself, since the **GREAT GOD** do's often speak exactly after the same Manner, and thereby without Doubt, did sufficiently, and as it were, *de Novo*, authorize our *Saviour*, to use that Turn of Expression.

And if there be any Force, in what he farther objects, *viz. That our SAVIOUR wanted Power, to prevail with his Hearers*; It makes as much against **GOD** Himself, who is frequently brought in by the Prophets, speaking, with the same Air of Severity, and any one who thinks, that the *Jew* has Cause, to blame our *Saviour*, for using the fore-mention'd Expressions, won'd do well, I think, to consider, that we meet with abundance of *Very dreadful Exprobrations* in *Leviticus*, and *Deuteronomy*, and if the *Jew*, who is oblig'd, to defend the Writings, which *Moses* publish'd, can offer any Thing, to justify the Expressions,

sions I refer to. We may bring the same, or much stronger Arguments, in Defence of that seemingly-rigid Practice of our Saviour.

Nay, we can offer more, in Defence of *Moses*, than the most bigotted *Jew*, since our Saviour has acquainted us, with its *Spiritual*, and *Mystick Sence*, tho' one, who has any tolerable Knowledge of the Prophets, may discern, that the GREAT GOD can't be said, to exceed the Bounds of Reason, when he uses such threatening, and upbraiding Expressions as these, *Wo unto you*, or, *I fore-tell you*, and 'twou'd be horrid Blasphemy, to say, *That the All-wise Being takes such improper Methods, for the Conversion of Sinners, as argue, that he wants the Common Prudence of a Man*, as Celsus makes our Saviour to do.

The Christians, who hold, that 'twas the same God, that spoke by the Prophets, and by our Blessed Saviour, can give a rational Account, of those Threatnings, and direful Exprobrations, which we meet with in the Scripture: And because Celsus pretends, to be so great a Philosopher, as well as so nicely vers'd in the Opinions, which the Christians hold, I shall

shall just touch upon a few Things,
that I think, very naturally occur.

I wou'd ask him, whether *Mercury*
in *Homer* don't take such Methods;
as were proper, to bring *Ulysses* to a
Sense of his Duty, when he says,

Hom.Od. *Wretch that thou art! what makes thee*
lib. 12. *(rove alone?)*
v. 281.

For 'tis the Part of *Syrens*, to fawn,
and flatter, who,

Hom.Od. *fit and chaunt 'mong dead Mens*
lib. 12. *(Bones.*
v. 145.

And speak after the following soft,
and soothing Manner,

Hom.Od. *Ulysses, Glory of the Greeks, draw near.*
lib. 12.
v. 184.

How then can he have the Face,
to say, that when the Prophets, and
our Saviour, say, *Woe unto you*, to
wean the Minds of Men from their
beloved Lusts, they hadn't a serious,
and compassionate Regard, to their
precious, and immortal Souls, which
they wou'd fain rescue, if 'twere pos-
sible, with a *Kind Cruelty*, if I may
so say, from the ever-burning, and
intolerably - scorching Flames of the
Infernal Lake.

But

But, perhaps, he dreams 'tis requisite, that the *Great God*, or any other Person, who bears the Characters of Divinity, shou'd *merely* consult the Dignity, of his own Excellent Nature, and act in such a Way, as wou'd not be agreeable to the Capacities of Men, nor proper to perswade their Wills, and engage their best Affections.

And how ridiculous do's he render himself, when he says, that *our Saviour wanted Power to perswade*? I cou'd produce many Parallel Instances, from the Writings of the *Jewish Prophets*, and of the *Greeks themselves*, and know very well, that some of the most Famous of 'em all, were *unable* to prevail with their *Enemies*, their Judges, and Accusers, to leave their Vices, and apply themselves to the Study of Philosophy, as a happy Introduction to a regular Course of Virtue.

CHAP. XXXVII.

THEN the Jew, in Conformity to the Principles of *Judaism*, says, *We hope for the Resurrection of the Body, to Eternal Life, and shall be abundantly convinc'd, of the Possibility of it, by the Resurrection of the Expected Messiah, who will be the Glorious Pattern, according to which, we also, shall be rais'd from the Dead.*

But I'm apt to think, that the Jews will hardly grant, that their *Messiah* will be the Pattern of their *Future Resurrection*.

However, if they really think so, and don't scruple to talk like *Celsus's Jew*, I shall ask one Question, that may serve for an Answer, since he undertakes, to confute us, by our own Authors, how comes it to pass, that he has read those Passages, which he thinks, make for him, but seems to have never read, any Thing of our Saviour's Resurrection, at least to be ignorant

ignorant of his being the *First-Born from the Dead*; or can there be nothing in the Scripture, but what he's willing shou'd be there? But since the Jew acknowledges the *Resurrection of the Body*, 'tis needless to bring Arguments, to prove it, (whether he do's in earnest believe it, and is able to defend it, or no and therefore, as to this Matter, I shall return him no farther Answer.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

THEN says Celsus's Jew, *Where for God's sake, is this pretended Messiah, that you make such a Stir about; for we want sadly to see him, and are ready to embrace his Doctrine?*

But we may ask him every Whit as well, where is *that Glorious Person*, who spoke by the Prophets, and wrought so many Miracles, to confirm the Law of their Celebrated Moses? I say, where is he, that we may see him, and may believe, that

you are *God's peculiar Heritage*? You won't say, I suppose, that Almighty God appear'd *always* to the *Jews themselves*. And why may not we be allow'd to take the same Method, in Defence of our *Saviour*, who once rose from the Dead, and did so powerfully work upon the Minds of his Disciples, that their lively Hope of a Glorious Resurrection to an Immortal Life of Inconceivable Happiness, and spotless Purity, did revive their fainting Spirits, and support, and comfort 'em, under the most grievous Torments.

Then he says, *Did this Pretender come down from Heav'n, on Purpose that we might reject him?* As if he were fond of the Basest Affronts, that cou'd possibly be offer'd him.

I answer, No; but he foresaw, what Treatment he shou'd have, and foretold the Unbelief of the *Jews*, and made use of it, as a *Happy Occasion* of the *Calling* of the *Gentiles*; *Unhappy*, *Unhappy* indeed *for them*, but very *happy for us*, who are not of the *Posterity of Abraham*.

For their *Fall*, (as Divine Providence was pleas'd to order the Matter) was the *Rising* of the *Gentiles*,

as

as the Prophetical Psalmist speaks, *People, whom I have not known, shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me.* And as the Prophet Isaiah says, *I was sought of them, that ask'd not for me: I am found of them, that sought me not.* Psal. 18. V. 43. Isa. 65. V. 1.

We know, what a Series of Temporal, and Dreadful Calamities the Crucifixion of our Saviour has entail'd, if I may so say, upon the Jewish Nation. And their Mouths wou'd be for ever stop'd, shou'd we upbraid 'em (but God forbid, we shou'd ev'n seem to insult 'em) and shou'd we demand of 'em, as we very well may, whether the Dispensations of Divine Providence toward 'em, don't bear the Awful Marks of his Severe Displeasure, and whether Almighty God didn't take a most unaccountable Method, if his Design were, to show the World, that the Jews were still his peculiar People (tho' too far from being zealous of Good Works) when he suffer'd such grievous Calamities to befall 'em, when their Metropolis was tak'n, and they were at once depriv'd of their Magnificent Temple, and all their Pompous Worship, and whatever they cou'd offer, to allay the Native Darknes, of this MYSTE-

RIOUS SCENE of PROVIDENCE,

DENCE, it might be largely insisted on, and improv'd to very valuable Purposes, by the Christians, who admire the Wise, and Deep Design of GOD, to make Use of the *Horrid Impiety* of those very Persons, who were Once his PECULIAR PEOPLE, as a Blessed Occasion of calling them, who were Strangers to the Covenants, and had no Right to the Glorious Promises, relating to the Messiah's Kingdom.

This was fore-told by the Prophets, viz. That GOD wou'd take an Advantage by the Sins of the Jews, not merely to call any single Nation, but to select some Persons, from all Parts of the Earth, that having Chosen the Foolish Things of the World, he might give an ignorant People very clear Discoveries of important Truths, taking his Kingdom from the Jews, to bestow it on the Despised Gentiles.

And I shall quote one Prophecy, concerning this surprizing Turn of Providence, which is in Deuteronomy, where the Prophetical Historian introduces GOD, speaking after the following Manner, *They have mov'd me to Jealousy, with that which is not GOD, they have provok'd me to Anger, with their Vanities: And I will move*

Deut. 32.
V. 21.

move them to Jealousy, with those, who
are not a People, I will provoke 'em to
Anger, with a foolish Nation.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THEN the Jew concludes with
the following Words, *We see,*
therefore, says he, that he was a Man,
like one of us, as we had Reason to
believe, both from Reason, and Expe-
rience.

But I can't for my Life conceive,
how our Saviour, if he was no more
than a Man, cou'd ever be so weak,
as to imagine, that his Doctrine wou'd
obtain, and much less meet with the
desir'd Success, that he shou'd ho-
nourably surmount all Difficulties,
and Dangers, and prove in the Event
superiour to the United Force of the
People, Senate, and Emperors of Rome,
and all Foreign Potentates. If we
don't allow, that he had a *DIVINE*,
as well as a *HUMANE NATURE*,
how can we account for his making

so many, and so remarkable Converts, on a sudden, when the Disadvantages were so great, which he labour'd under? Had they all been Men of Reason, that he had to deal with, I confess, the Wonder wou'd sensibly abate. But the greatest Part by far were void of Reason, and little better than Brutes, in a Humane Shape, and which is worse, were Slaves to their unruly Passions, and on that Account 'twas far more difficult to reclaim 'em from their exorbitant Vices.

So that we must resolve this Matter, into his being the *Wisdom, and the Power of GOD*, let the Unbelieving Jews, and the Learned Greeks, gnash their Teeth, as much as they please, or produce what they can to the contrary.

And I might say, that Instances of his Divine Powers are not wholly wanting, ev'n at this Distance of Time.

We shall therefore not only continue, by the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, to believe in God the Father, according to the Doctrine of his *ETERNAL SON*, but shall also be excited,
by

by a *Holy Ambition*, to endeavour to convert the ignorant Heathens to the Christian Faith, while they by all Means will have it, that we truly are the Persons, whose Ignorance deserves highly to be pity'd, (tho' we know very well, that the Case they commiserate is in Truth their own) and they give it out, that we are guilty of Imposture, whereas they do but condemn their own frequent, and most apparent Practice.

I am sure, if we lead Persons aside, 'tis a very *Happy Seducement*, since the Eternal Welfare of their Better Part is *Honestly* aim'd at, and *Effectually* consulted by us, who are honour'd sometimes with being Instruments, in the Hand of **ALMIGHTY GOD** to reclaim 'em.

By the **GRACE OF GOD**, with which, our sincere, and earnest, tho' weak Endeavours, do concur, they are prevail'd with, to leave their former Intemperance, or at least make some slow, and imperfect Advances toward the contrary Virtue, they leave their unjust Dealing, or at least approach to the Confines of Justice, they renounce their Superstition, and Folly, or at least are conducted,

ducted into the High-Way, if I may so say, that leads to the MOST SUBLIME, and MOST USEFUL WISDOM, They leave their Cowardly, and Sordid Temper, and are inspir'd, with the NOBLEST KIND OF COURAGE, which appears, on all just Occasions, but especially when they are call'd, to lay down their Lives, and seal the Truth of their most Holy Religion, with their warmest Blood.

To conclude, without Doubt, our SAVIOUR is already come, who was expressly foretold, ev'n by the Jewish Prophets. My Antagonist therefore did not a little discover his Ignorance, in making his Jew say, That A CERTAIN PROPHET foretold the Coming of the MESSIAH.

But because Celsus, who brings in his Jew, speaking, as he imagines, agreeably to the Principles of Judaism, thinks fit, that he shou'd break off here, (tho' indeed he adds a few Things, that are not worthy to be mention'd) I shall here put a Period to my SECOND BOOK.

And

And if I may but have seasonable,
and suitable Assistance from above,
I shall endeavour in my **THIRD**
BOOK, to answer some remaining
Arguments, if they may be so call'd
against the **CHRISTIAN RELIGI-**
ON, which *Celsus* thought fit to
use, and endeavours with all his
Might to maintain.

F I N I S.

And if I may have reasonable
and I have a right to have above
I will not have in the THIRD
BANK of America to be called
against the C. W. Bank
ON, which C. W. Bank is to
be, and otherwise with all his
might to maintain.

F I N I S

